

Pollard case:
The view
from Israel

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FORGET IRANGATE, FORGET ARMS CONTROL

WE GOT SEX! SPIES!

Spy scandal may not be coincidence

By Jim Naureckas

Secretary of State George Shultz's recent mission to Moscow to discuss arms negotiations was overshadowed by intense controversy over alleged Soviet espionage. Reports of Soviet infiltration and bugging of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow were taken so seriously that 70 senators voted that Shultz should not travel to Moscow at all because his security could not be guaranteed. A chance at improved U.S.-Soviet relations seemed to be lost because of an unfortunate coincidence.

But was the timing of the latest spy revelations a coincidence? The history of U.S. spy scandals suggests that their relationship to American foreign policy objectives may not be entirely accidental. Consider the following:

- In February 1976, when Gerald Ford was under heavy pressure—including criticism from then-candidate Ronald Reagan—to back away from the Soviets, reports were leaked that the KGB was bombarding the U.S. Embassy in Moscow with microwaves. Initially portrayed as an espionage

technique, the broadcasting later seemed more like an attempt to jam U.S. electronic surveillance. In any case, U.S. officials said they had known about the microwaves for 15 years, but the leaks still produced an uproar over Soviet spying.

- Jimmy Carter's "get tough" policy toward the Soviets, unveiled in June 1978, was accompanied by a "spy war" touched off when two Soviet United Nations employees, Rudolf Chernyayev and Valdik Enger, were arrested and convicted in an FBI sting operation. "The U.S.," wrote *Time*, "had deliberately violated an informal understand-

ing between Soviet and American intelligence services that each other's spies will be discreetly ferreted out of the country when they are caught."

- The August-September 1985 "spy dust" scare was set off when the U.S. State Department announced that the KGB was sprinkling the Moscow embassy with NPDD, a supposedly carcinogenic substance visible only under infrared light. The State Department admitted knowing about this "revelation" for nine years, but it chose to reveal it the week the U.S. began major Star Wars testing, which officials feared might have put the U.S. at a disadvantage at the November 1985 summit in Geneva.

- Gennadi Zakharov, a Soviet who worked for the U.N., was set up and arrested by the FBI in August 1986. The arrest, the *New York Times* reported, was approved by then-National Security Council chief John Poindexter. As in the 1978 case, the U.S. violated protocol by keeping Zakharov in custody, and the Soviets retaliated by arresting reporter Nicholas Daniloff. The affair was not settled until September 30, putting the Soviets on the defensive at the Reykjavik summit which began 10 days later.

Were these scandals carefully stage-managed public relations efforts? That's what the Soviets claim. A Soviet diplomatic spokesman told *In These Times*, "Whenever the possibility for improved relations between the Soviet Union and America arises, certain circles in the U.S. try to undermine that possibility." The State Department had no comment on the Soviet charge. But the very least that can be said is that when a scandal does arise, the U.S. tries to milk it for maximum propaganda value.

Two scandals: The U.S. Embassy in Moscow is now at the center of another spy scandal—or rather, of two scandals. The first involves Clayton Lonetree, the Marine sergeant who told his supervisors last December that he had slept with a Soviet woman, Violetta Seina, when he was a guard at the embassy in 1985 and early 1986. Lonetree's confession made no mention of letting Seina or anyone else into the embassy. That allegation came from one of Lonetree's fellow Marine guards, Cpl. Arnold Bracy, who told investigators he stood guard while Lonetree allowed KGB agents to enter sensitive embassy areas. However, according to Lonetree's lawyer, William Kunstler, Bracy has recanted this statement. Kunstler told *In These Times* that polygraph tests given to Bracy support his present claim that he and Lonetree did not allow anyone into the embassy.

Kunstler described the case against his client as "a combination of his fantasy and their fraud. ...The administration wants to hang somebody," he said. "It's a pretty good way to drive contragate off the front pages." Both the State Department and the Marine Corps declined to discuss the Lonetree case with *In These Times*, but press reports say unnamed administration officials admit the government has no evidence of the embassy violation beyond Bracy's recanted statement.

Even if Bracy's earlier story is true, the extent of security damage remains unclear. Seina was an embassy employee at the time and so had regular access to much of the facilities. Alexander Cockburn reported in a *Wall Street Journal* column that classified areas of the embassy have combination locks and are not accessible to the guards. The State Department acknowledged to *In These Times* that "in certain embassies guards do not have access to certain communications areas."

But U.S. politicians had a strong bipartisan reaction to the alleged breach of security: Reagan was calling it "outrageous" while Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-WV) declared Lonetree and Bracy "not fit to live." The uproar culminated in the Senate's formal recommendation that Shultz not go to Moscow, for fear that Seina had planted bugs that are still uncovered, more than a year later, in every part of the embassy.

The other scandal concerns the new embassy complex, of which completion is now more than three years overdue. Charges have been leveled that the new embassy has been riddled with eavesdropping devices by Soviet construction crews, and may never be secure. Congressional critics suggest the U.S. should tear down the building and start over, which could result in the U.S. moving out of its present embassy in 1995 or later.

These allegations, like others that have been raised about the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, are nothing new. The U.S. was concerned from the beginning of the project that the Soviets would attempt to implant listening devices in the structure. In fact, in 1983 the *New York Times* reported that Soviet construction workers had walked off the job at the new embassy site, saying that the X-ray device the U.S. was using to check the building for spy devices was a health hazard.

"They've known from the start that we were going to check every square inch of those buildings for bugs," the *New York Times* quoted an embassy source as saying at the time.

Behind the controversy: Part of why this scandal has caused such a widespread uproar is the desire of congressional critics to embarrass the president. Among those senators voting against the Shultz trip to Moscow were such arms control advocates as Alan Cranston (D-CA) and John Chafee (R-RI). But part may be attributed to administration factions who wanted to be able to explain the disappointing Shultz trip on the "pull" cast over negotiations by Soviet espionage.

Shultz went to Moscow bearing some unfriendly proposals. A struggle between the hardline anti-arms control Department of Defense (DoD) and the slightly more dovish State Department was won by the Pentagon. It was the DoD's position that Shultz presented to his Soviet counterparts: the period over which proposed arms reductions took place would be lengthened, the period for which the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty would be adhered to (even under Reagan's perverse interpretation) would be shortened and the Soviets' offer to improve the partial nuclear test bans would not be taken up. Shultz was also directed to keep on the table a Defense Department proposal that would eliminate mobile ICBMs—which was another U.S. proposal that would require the USSR to destroy existing weapons, while the only U.S. weapons affected were still on the drawing board.

Most important, however, Shultz apparently told Gorbachov that the U.S. did not want to remove all missiles from Europe after all, despite the much-publicized "Zero Option" of 1981. The administration blames Western Europe for the switch, claiming that U.S. allies worry about a debatable Soviet superiority in conventional weapons.

Despite efforts by both sides to put an optimistic spin on the talks, both sides remain far apart on the most important issues—long-range missiles and Star Wars. To the extent that the U.S. posture changed, it was away from the Soviet position.

But some analysts are still hopeful that an accord can be reached on medium- and short-range missiles that will eliminate or greatly reduce these weapons. "They're of marginal military significance," said Dunbar Lockwood of the Center for Defense Information, a private Washington-based research organization. "They're a tiny percentage of the nuclear weapons that can be targeted at Europe."

Reagan could use such an agreement to argue that his hardline approach had been right all along. "When you're asking Congress for more money for weapons you want to make it look like you're serious about arms control," Lockwood said.

Lockwood said he did not believe the administration used the spy scandal as a ploy to derail arms control: "They used so many other ploys successfully that they really didn't need to."

INSIDE STORY

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By Howard Levine
and Dennis Bernstein

Congress probes FBI scare tactics

AS FBI DIRECTOR WILLIAM WEBSTER WAS testifying before one congressional committee about his fitness to become the head of the CIA, another congressional committee was investigating allegations that the FBI embarked on a nationwide effort to harass, intimidate and spy on Americans who did volunteer work in Nicaragua through a California-based support group.

Rep. Don Edwards (D-CA) said he will investigate why the FBI paid surprise visits to the workplaces of a dozen members of TECNICA and demanded interviews with them. Edwards, a former FBI agent, is chair of the House subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights, which oversees the FBI.

"I don't like the sound of the interviews," he said. "We want to be sure that people who have different views [from the Reagan administration's] are not being investigated just to harass them."

David Creighton, program director for TECNICA, an organization that arranges for technical volunteers to work in Nicaragua, said that between March 31 and April 2 teams of FBI agents went to the employers of a dozen volunteers in six cities and asked to see the TECNICA volunteers. They told the employers that they were conducting a "national security" investigation.

"A Russian dupe": Ellen Finkelstein, who works at a Chicago publishing house and taught word processing in Nicaragua, said, "FBI agents arranged with my personnel director for an interview in my office. The agents told me that I was being a dupe of the Russians and that I was being given a chance to stop doing something I might regret later."

"It was frightening to be subjected to this kind of pressure," Finkelstein added, "and I feel it was a clear attempt to jeopardize my job and reputation."

According to Creighton, another woman was told by an agent in front of her employer that she could lose her job if she didn't cooperate.

The employers of two San Francisco volunteers were also contacted by the FBI, Creighton said. Neither was at work that day and when contacted by the FBI at home declined to be interviewed. Both refused to be interviewed by the media.

In addition, "by having the nationwide visits occur almost simultaneously," Creighton said, "it had the effect of catching everyone off guard." TECNICA volunteers in San Diego, Seattle, New York and Washington, D.C., were contacted by the FBI as well, according to Creighton. But he said that virtually all of the volunteers refused to be interviewed. Three friends of the volunteers were also questioned, according to Creighton.

John Holford, an FBI press spokesman in San Francisco, said the bureau was "aware of the allegations but response at this time would be inappropriate. We can't discuss any methods of investigation."

But according to FBI personnel, some of the agents were part of a division at the bureau that has the responsibility for investigating espionage.

Norton Tooby, a cooperating attorney with the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, which is providing counsel for TECNICA, said that pulling volunteers

from their workplace was "designed for maximum intimidation and embarrassment." Tooby said he didn't know yet whether a lawsuit would be filed.

Rights violated? Edwards said his committee will investigate whether the visits violated FBI regulations that forbid investigations of U.S. citizens or businesses unless there is evidence of wrongdoing. The guidelines also bar the FBI from interviewing a person's co-workers or employers in the beginning stages of an investigation. The FBI may not investigate citizens merely because of their political beliefs or lawful political activities.

TECNICA Executive Director Dr. Michael Urmann said that in the three and one-half years of TECNICA's existence more than 350 volunteers have traveled to Nicaragua to teach courses and consult in health, engineering, computing, education and agriculture. "It is the success of our teaching program that has caused TECNICA to become part of the FBI's harassment campaign," Urmann said.

Tooby believes that the goal of the FBI's program was to harass TECNICA volunteers and to intimidate potential volunteers. Urmann said that TECNICA's projects are strictly humanitarian and do not violate President Reagan's restrictions against aiding Nicaragua. Those restrictions prohibit providing technical equipment to the Nicaraguans but not technical assistance. Creighton said some FBI agents wrongly told volunteers that their activities in Nicaragua violated U.S. law.

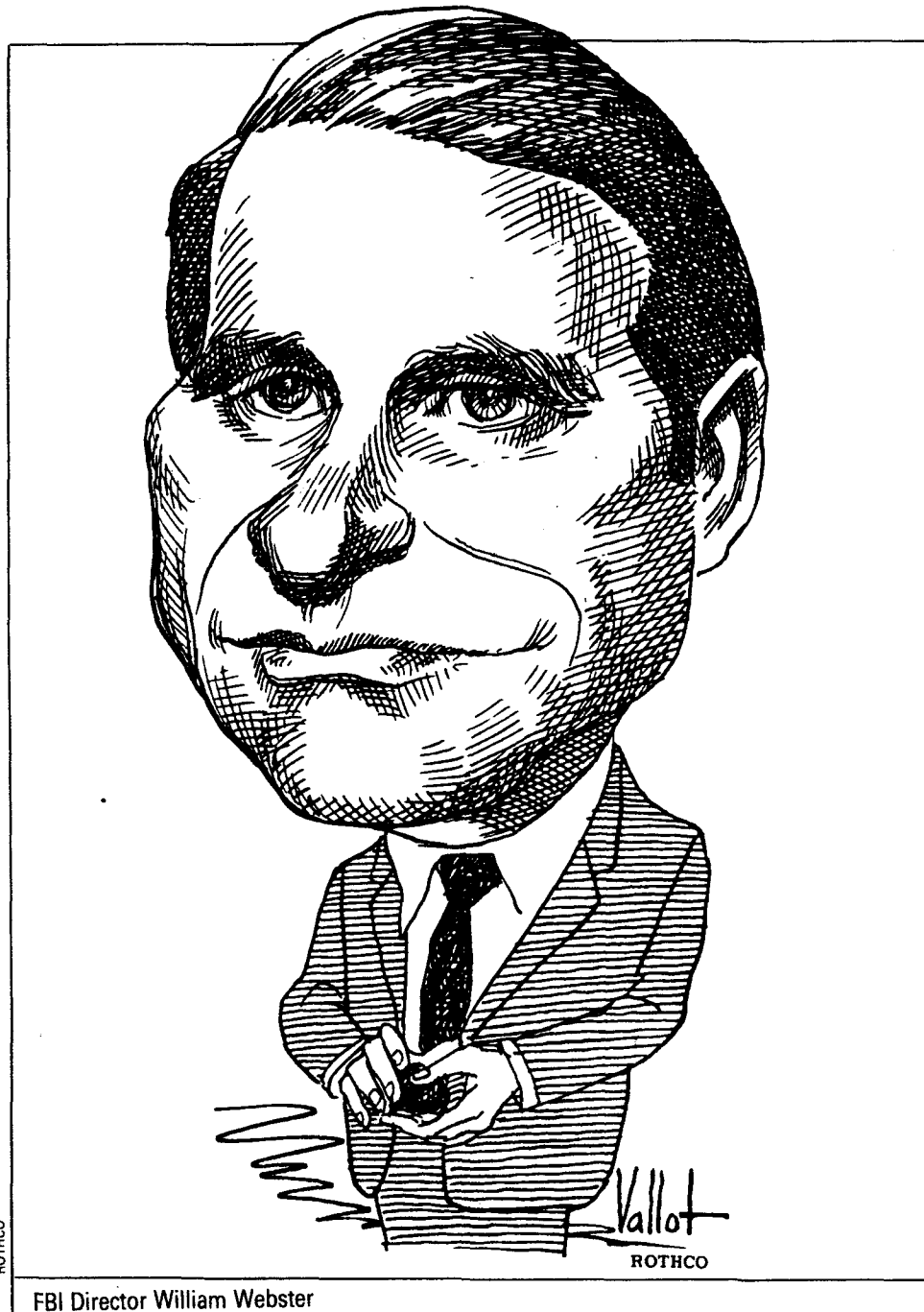
Tooby said he did not know how the FBI got the names of the returning volunteers, but said he thought it was part of a nationwide surveillance program of Central American groups. Edwards' committee recently documented instances where U.S. Customs agents had interrogated people returning from Nicaragua and in some cases had seized personal belongings.

In addition, the committee documented more than 100 cases where FBI agents questioned people who had recently returned from Nicaragua. The committee also heard testimony regarding 58 burglaries that were directed against groups involved in dissent against U.S. policies in Central America. The

"We want to be sure that people who have different views are not being investigated just to harass them."

FBI has taken only a cursory initiative in investigating these burglaries, saying they were unrelated and could not be shown to be politically motivated. Many of the groups, however, believe that the break-ins were politically motivated.

Pattern of intimidation: Earlier this year, Frank Varella admitted to being an FBI infiltrator of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) in Dallas, Texas, from 1981 to 1984. He said he was part of a nationwide network of informants



in major cities across the country.

"The organization," recalled Varella, "was characterized [by the FBI] as being a terrorist organization that was spreading all across the U.S. and there was a need to go in, investigate them and, of course, stop them."

Varella said he was given a false identity and told to infiltrate the group. He was told not only to report on activities, but also to foster discrediting or criminal acts that could be used against the group. For example, he said, he was urged to seduce a nun active in CISPES as well as procure weapons for the group.

Though the FBI admits that Varella was its employee, it denies many of his claims. The substance of his charges, however, have been substantiated through numerous interviews and other voluminous documentation provided by the former FBI snoop.

Varella said he went to El Salvador under FBI auspices. Once there, he said, he was given a list by the National Guard of "people condemned to death for being Communists." He maintained his contact with the Guard upon his return to this country and would warn the Salvadoran military when Salvadoran deportees or North American activists were about to travel to El Salvador.

Documents released under the Freedom of Information Act indicate that 24 FBI field offices spent more than five years in an intensive investigation of CISPES. The Center for

Constitutional Rights calls the TECNICA and CISPES operations part of a pattern of "FBI abuse" that raises serious questions about FBI Director William Webster's nomination to the post of director of the CIA.

"A week before Webster is due to be confirmed, you have a dozen or more FBI agents sweeping out across the country against a domestic dissent group, a group that is simply doing something completely legal, sending humanitarian assistance through its own people to Nicaragua," said Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

"So I think a lot of hard, serious questions ought to be asked about Webster and covert operations at home," he added.

But Sen. David Boren (D-OK), chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has indicated that Webster will have no problems being confirmed. A committee vote is expected this week.

David Lerner, a spokesman for the Center for Constitutional Rights, believes Webster's track record should make the committee wary of the appointment: "If Webster can carry out this type of investigation where his actions are supposedly subject to public scrutiny, I wonder what he can accomplish with the aid of CIA secrecy?"

Howard Levine is a San Francisco-based journalist and **Dennis Bernstein** contributes frequently to *In These Times*. Seth Rosenfeld contributed to the reporting of this story.

By Joel Bleifuss

News from the right

Presidential hopeful Rep. Jack Kemp got a standing ovation from about 1,200 conservative youth when he recently called for Secretary of State George Shultz to resign. According to Mike Gannon, writing in the current issue of the right-wing *Campus Review* of Coralville, Iowa, that was one of the highlights of the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) held on February 19 and 21 in Washington. Other memorable moments included: ABC news "hatchetman" Sam Donaldson assuring the crowd that he was not a biased reporter—after all, he voted for Barry Goldwater in 1964; Vice President George Bush cancelling his scheduled appearance, thereby "snubbing the CPAC group" and exposing his "moderate tendencies"; and a straw poll showing that 63 percent of the conference participants favored Kemp for president. However, on this last point, an anonymous source told the *Campus Review* that the poll-takers "used the same ballot counters as Ferdinand Marcos." That comment is an inside joke referring to Kemp campaign adviser and CPAC poll-taker Roger Stone, whose public relations firm, Black, Manafort, Stone and Atwater, was "retained by Marcos during his bungled attempt to steal last year's Philippine election."

A good year for civil disobedience

The *Nuclear Register*, an anti-nuclear civil disobedience journal, recently announced that an estimated 10,200 people in North America were arrested in 1986 for committing acts of civil disobedience. In Canada and the U.S., about 3,200 protesters were arrested at 75 sites in 165 anti-nuclear arms race actions, and in the U.S. last year 4,500 people were arrested for opposing the Reagan administration's policies in Central America and 2,500 were arrested at demonstrations focusing on South Africa. The *Nuclear Register* also says that as of January 65 people were doing time for anti-nuclear civil disobedience. The sentences ranged from 30 days to 18 years.

The anti-humanitarians

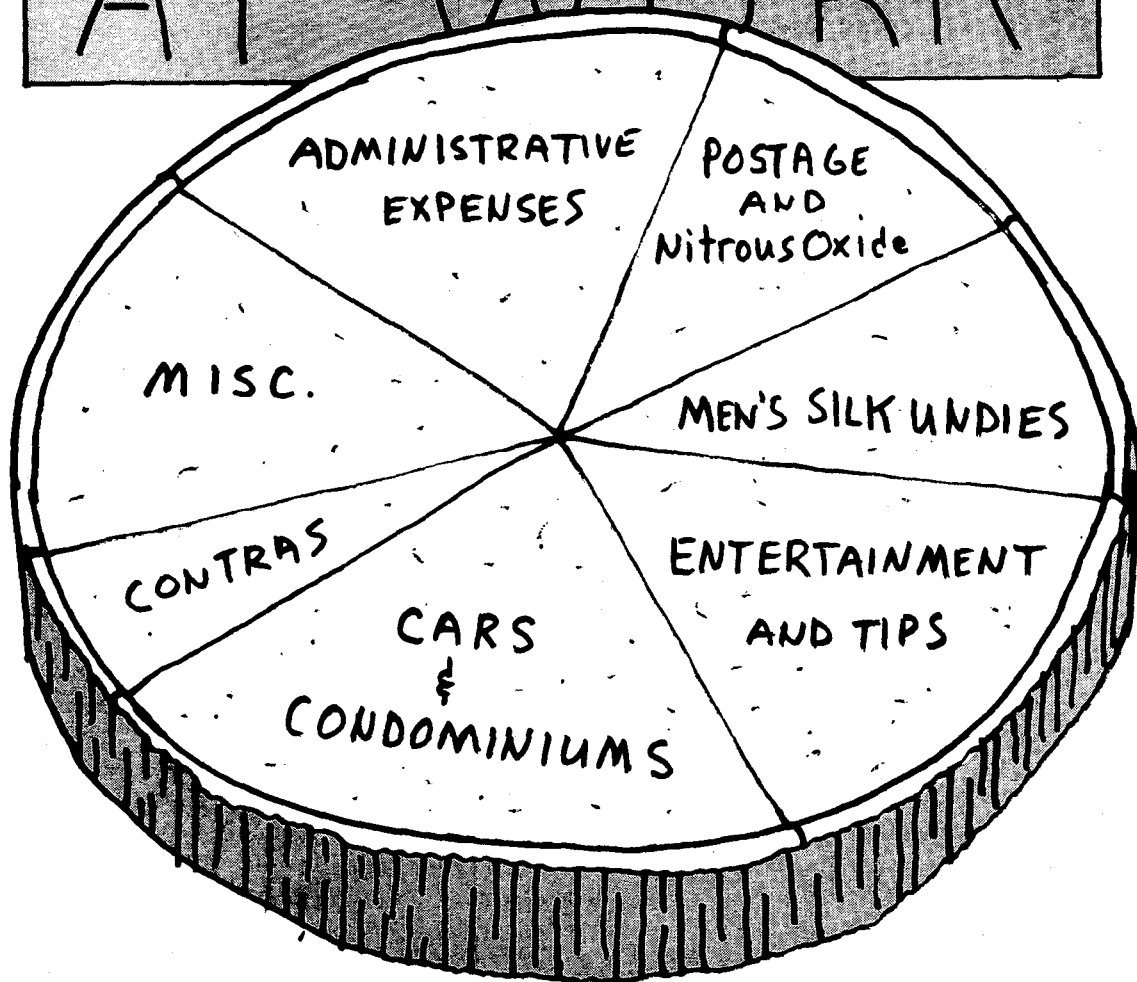
The Reagan administration recently resubmitted the name of Charles Moser as a nominee for the National Council on the Humanities, the group that oversees the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Senate did not act on Moser's nomination last year because there was no time to deal with the resulting uproar. Moser is a professor of Slavic languages at George Washington University, who is intellectually inclined to ban textbooks that are "anti-Christian, anti-American, depressing and negative." Moser is also a leader of Accuracy in Media, a pack of right-wing watchdogs that this month is submitting shareholder resolutions at the annual meetings of General Electric (NBC) and CBS. The group wants the two networks to "establish a viewer's advocate to assure accuracy, fairness and balance in programming."

The National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, an academic lobbying group, is calling for the Moser nomination to be rejected. National Coordinating Committee Director Page Putnam told *In These Times*, "Under the Reagan administration NEH nominations have basically been payoffs to political supporters, some of whom are only marginally familiar with the humanities. Under Carter people came from state humanities councils. We had an entirely different group of people then."

Impeachable credentials

Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-TX) recently entered a resolution into the House of Representatives that consists of six articles of impeachment against President Reagan. Five of the articles include alleged violations of the Arms Export Control Act, the Foreign Assistance Act, the National Security Act, the Boland Amendment and a 1986 law restricting arms transfers to nations that support terrorism. The sixth article alleges that President Reagan has exhibited "a pattern of irresponsible executive decision making" and has failed to fulfill his "constitutional duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed." Nick Bourn, the congressman's legislative assistant, told *In These Times* that the response to the impeachment resolution from the people Gonzalez represents in San Antonio is "overwhelmingly positive." Bourn encourages other folks who support Gonzalez's efforts to tell their Congress members to support H.R.111.

YOUR CONTRA \$
AT WORK



Miles DeCoater

Contragate fund-raising for guns and lovers

The story that follows is a chapter of the Contragate scandal that the dominant media—the networks and newspapers of record—are choosing not to cover.

Right-wing fund-raisers working with Lt. Col. Oliver North to aid the contras paid thousands of the dollars they raised to their lovers, according to an April 9 National Public Radio report by Frank Browning. The fund-raisers' financial records show that the money was given as payments for unspecified consulting services.

The man behind this alleged fund-raising fraud is Carl R. "Spitz" Channell, who heads the Washington-based fund-raising organization the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty (NEPL). Channell raised about \$10 million that was channeled through Swiss banks to support the contras. According to Browning, less than one-third of the money raised reached the CIA-sponsored rebels.

NEPL's internal financial documents reveal that the organization paid companions of NEPL's top staff a series of "consulting" fees.

In 1986 two checks totaling \$17,000 were written to Eric Olson, Channell's lover. Channell and Olson have lived together since 1981 and in that time have jointly purchased two apartments, one a \$300,000 condominium in Wash-

ington where they currently live. A high-placed source who worked with NEPL told Browning that he knew of no services Olson has provided the organization.

On April 15 Browning reported that "two days after NEPL wrote Olson one of those checks, he gave \$5,000 to a political action committee (PAC) controlled by Channell," American Conservative Trust. (Channell is also head of the Western Goals Foundation, a group that, among other things, has broken laws in its efforts to compile a computerized list of subversive Americans.) When asked about Browning's reports, Olson told *In These Times* that he had no comment.

Another questionable payment involves NEPL's Executive Director Daniel Lynn Conrad, who for the past two years has received a \$5,000 monthly salary from NEPL. During that same time, however, NEPL financial records show that \$56,000 was paid to a San Francisco firm called Public Management Institute, a company Conrad founded in the '70s.

The current president of Public Management Institute is Ken Gilman, who, according to acquaintances, has been Conrad's lover for several years. The two have been business partners for almost a decade and share a jointly owned condominium in San Francisco. Gilman said his company has provided NEPL with advice on corporate fund-raising, but declined to tell Browning explicitly what the firm did for the \$56,000. A former NEPL

employee has said he knows of no services obtained by NEPL from Public Management Institute.

A source also told Browning that Channell frequently demanded that NEPL checks be issued to individuals who had not presented invoices and who had, in the source's opinion, provided no visible services.

It has been common knowledge in some political and journalistic circles, according to Browning, that NEPL's top two leaders and at least four of their subordinates were homosexual.

When asked about Browning's report, Jared Cameron, a public-relations consultant retained by Channell, told *In These Times* that Browning was using documents "stolen by a disgruntled employee.... Generally and specifically the whole thing is a composite of unsubstantiated rumors, sloppy reporting and vicious character assassinations.... The straight story is that nothing illegal was done."

Channell met frequently with North in 1985 and 1986, and attended Reagan-hosted White House banquets that honored donors to the contra cause. One NEPL staff member told Browning that the largest amounts of money came in after the wealthy donors had attended a special meeting with North and/or the president.

"Given that level of contact, and given Channell's involvement with apparent CIA bank accounts in Switzerland used to process the money, it seems pretty improbable that the administration didn't have

a full background check made before it helped set up the Channell operation," Browning said in his report.

"The question we can't answer yet is why Oliver North chose to work with a group of gay men who, as it turns out, seemed about as intent on helping themselves as they were in helping the contras."

A source who requested anonymity told *In These Times* that he believes the Reagan administration knew very well that Channell and friends were gay and chose to work with them because of that. The men's homosexuality made them a perfect group to keep in check because their fund-raising livelihood would have been jeopardized if their right-wing benefactors—a good many of whom were elderly widows—had found out that the young men they had been giving money to were gay.

Two wealthy widows, Barbara Newington of Greenwich, Conn., and Ellen Garwood, of Austin, Texas, together contributed about \$5 million to Channell's organization.

Throgs Neck: Howard Beach's ugly cousin

The following account of racist violence originally appeared in the Village Voice. The story has been largely ignored by New York City news organs.

They were black, they were eating pizza in the wrong neighborhood and they were beaten by a gang of whites. This time the scene of the crime was in Throgs Neck in the Bronx, not Howard Beach. And this time the victims—still alive but badly shaken—weren't grown men. They were young girls, ages 11 to 13—gifted students on their way home from school.

On September 12, Taquana Belfon, Denise Royal, Vennie Greene, Sashuun and Nikia Spivey were taking their usual route home from I.S. 192, the Piagentini-Jones School. They got off the bus at the corner of East Tremont Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard only to see their southbound #5 transfer pulling away. So they decided to pass some time with a slice and a soda at D.J. Pizza.

That's when the ugliness began. According to an account based on interviews with the girls' mothers and substantially confirmed by police, a tough-looking teenager standing near the pizza joint shouted, "Where you niggers going? Get out of here!" Then he yanked down his pants, shoved out his bare buttocks and bellowed, "I mooned you niggers!"

The girls bought their snacks and rushed back to wait for the bus home to the South Bronx. At the bus shelter stood the mooner—with three more angry white men, yelling, "Niggers go home. Go back to Harlem. Go back to Africa! We're

Along with this alleged corruption came a heavy dose of hypocrisy. In his radio report Browning interviewed a Texas businessman and contra supporter named Burt Hurlbut. Hurlbut said that several years ago he had "put together an organization to oppose the homosexual expansion." He said that he would now be in the middle of that fight "if AIDS had not come along to, more or less, do it for us." Spitz Channell contributed \$1,000 to help Hurlbut get that organization off the ground.

If what Browning reports is true, why is this story not getting wider coverage? Other news organs have been investigating the matter.

At an April 10 meeting *Washington Post* editors decided not to pursue their ongoing investigation into this aspect of the Contragate scandal. One source told *In These Times* that they feared the resulting story would be an unwarranted intrusion into private lives. Apparently the *Washington Post's* investigation—which had gone much farther than National Public Radio's report—in-

gonna go home and get our whips!" Twelve-year-old Taquana Belfon dropped her books in fright. When she bent to pick them up, the men spit on her, spit on all of them. Sashuun Spivey's soda bottle slipped from her hands. When she tried to pick it up, a fifth man, described by Spivey's mother as "a huge man...a weightlifter," punched her in the face, sending her eyeglasses reeling into the street.

In the midst of all this, white male number six jumped out of a passing van and joined in the attack. The terrified children remember a woman wandering out from a nearby stationery store and clucking, "What are those niggers doing now? They're always causing trouble." Other store owners watched in silence. No one called the police.

The attack didn't end until two Hispanic men intervened, one by placing his hand between a fist and a 13-year-old's head, the other by flagging down a nearby patrol car. "My daughters thought they were going to be killed," said Gloria Spivey, mother of Sashuun, 13, and Nikia, 11.

Anthony Baratta and Vincent Costello, both from Throgs Neck, were arrested that day and charged with aggravated harassment and endangering the welfare of a child. Costello, a stocky 18-year-old, was also charged with public lewdness. Baratta, 21, had an outstanding arrest warrant for a Tremont Avenue gas station burglary. Both were released on their own recognizance.

Christopher Castignoli, the gargantuan 19-year-old who punched Sashuun Spivey, wasn't arrested on assault charges until October—only after the children's parents and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) met with Bronx District Attorney Mario Merola to

cluded receipts indicating that contra-intended funds had been used to purchase men's silk underpants.

"I don't think the regular straight press is going to pick up on this," an Associated Press reporter told *In These Times*. "We [at AP] didn't feel it [Channell's gay lifestyle] was relevant to the story unless some impropriety is found."

Journalists familiar with the controversy put forth two possible explanations for this editorial blackout. One is that the major media organizations feared that the public, and the administration, would not be able to handle another Contragate revelation—especially one involving the diversion of contra monies to the male companions of administration insiders. The other explanation is that the editors making these decisions are liberal straights who fear being accused of homophobia. If the funds had been diverted to female companions, this argument goes, the story would be all over the front page, with photos.

—Joel Bleifuss

complain about the lagging police investigation.

Until Michael Griffith died on the Belt Parkway, Throgs Neck was way ahead of Howard Beach on the city's bias barometer: 11 racially motivated incidents were reported in the Bronx's 45th Precinct last year, six in the 106th Precinct, Howard Beach. Eight incidents in Throgs Neck involved whites attacking blacks, compared to only two in Howard Beach.

On March 23, Costello and Castignoli appeared in Bronx County Criminal Court. Only three days earlier Castignoli's attorney, Pat Stiso, had said his client would plead innocent—as he had done on three previous appearances before Judge Alexander Hunter Jr., who is black. But when the case was called before Judge Harvey Sklaver, who is white, the two defendants admitted their guilt. Judges rotate courtrooms at random. "They figured they could take advantage of a judge who wasn't familiar with the background of the case," said Assistant District Attorney Anthony Abbatini, whose Bronx office is pushing for a one-year jail sentence.

They figured right. After a quick but heated debate in chambers, Judge Sklaver made his announcement: on May 11, he will give the men three years' probation and 100 hours of community service. They had lived in the Bronx for 19 years without getting into trouble, he argued, so they should be allowed the benefit of the doubt. Baratta, still clinging to his innocence, got an adjournment until May 18.

Sandra Wilson, Taquana's mom, was stunned by the judge's 20-minute disposal of the case. The men who terrorized and degraded her child are now free to haunt the same bus shelter, the same pizza place, the same streets.

—Lynnell Hancock

So you want to be a spook

CIA recruitment literature describes the agency's overseas "Clandestine Service" as "the cutting edge of American intelligence." What's life like on that cutting edge? CIA promotional literature offers this information: "Besides its primary job of collecting intelligence, the Clandestine Service—also called the Directorate of Operations—seeks to change adversaries into friends or neutrals through covert operations by political, psychological or paramilitary means. The main factor is secrecy, clandestinity. All taken together, it is as wonderfully simple and as amazingly complex as the closest friendship. There is risk, of course, to officers in the Clandestine Service. Statistically, the risks are slightly higher than for police or firemen in a large city." The brochure concludes, "Guard the secret of your intention to try for the Clandestine Service even from your closest friends. There are two reasons for this. It keeps confidential your intent to become an operations officer and thus contributes to your overall security. And it is your first training assignment in the Clandestine Service. Now it begins."

Instant death squad: just add blood

The Philippine military is helping organize civilian vigilante groups to fight the Communist New People's Army, according to Mark Fineman of the *Los Angeles Times*. These vigilantes have already killed scores of suspected Communists. In Davao City, 600 miles south of Manila, thousands of politicians, former rebels and unemployed youth are being armed by the city's military police commander, Col. Franco Calida. An American priest in the city, Father Jack Walsh, said he fears this policy will lead to the creation of right-wing death squads similar to those that plague El Salvador. "Myself and a few others suspect there will be a real bloodbath one of these days." Col. Calida, however, sees his vigilante program as being on the cutting edge of the government's counterinsurgency strategy. "We are cooking them in their own oil; we're giving them a dose of their own medicine," he said. "We're using their tactics to turn the public tide against them, and it's working. There are almost no Communists left in Davao City today, just the priests and nuns, and we'll go after them next."



An Olympic fund-raiser

South Korea has one of the worst human rights records of any U.S. ally. In an effort to make sure the 1988 Olympics in Seoul do not put a cosmetic gloss on that deplorable record, the North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea recently printed the above poster created by prize-winning American-Korean artist James Yang. The poster is "dedicated to Park Chong Chol (1965-1987), torture victim" (see *In These Times*, Feb. 18). The poster's dominant colors are light-blue, green-blue, bright-blue and black and it measures 24 by 36 inches. The price is \$15 plus \$4 postage. All proceeds go to the Campaign to Make Korea Fit for the Olympics, 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002.

Black movement's clashing factions discovering a new middle ground

By Salim Muwakkil

THE OMINOUS IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECLINE in living conditions for a large and growing segment of black America is forcing a reconciliation of black leaders who formerly advocated conflicting strategies. The major conflict always has been between advocates of self-help and those who urge protest.

The self-help, or accommodationist, approach traditionally is espoused by black conservatives and nationalists. The protest, or assimilationist, tradition is the pedigree of the civil rights movement. Although advocates of these conflicting visions occasionally find agreement, antagonistic relations between them are the rule.

Self-helpers fare best when issues of racial equity seemingly are ignored by the larger society. And although such groups have attracted enormous support, the protest strain gets better press. Lately that acclaim has been deserved: the protest strategy is responsible for civil rights successes of the '50s, '60s and '70s. But a vogue for self-help is at large and civil righters lately have been put on the defensive.

The Joint Center for Political Studies (JCPS), a black-oriented think tank based in Washington, D.C., recently published an essay that makes a compelling case for combining the two strategies. Entitled *Black Initiatives and Governmental Responsibility*, the essay was written under the auspices of the center's Committee on Policy for Racial Justice.

"We believe that the one-sided approaches to black progress we often hear today are simplistic and utterly inadequate," wrote John Hope Franklin and Eleanor Holmes Norton in the essay's introduction. Franklin, often referred to as the dean of black history, is the James B. Duke professor emeritus at Duke University. Norton is a law professor at the Georgetown University Law Center and former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

According to JCPS President Eddie Williams, the essay is the collaborative effort of "30 distinguished black scholars from around the nation" and is intended to "clarify public discussion and confusion about black community directions."

The list of committee members includes many names well-known in the civil rights struggle and bristles with credentials. Such stateliness is important to Williams, who founded the center in 1970 and is aggressively seeking respectability for JCPS—already the most highly regarded source of political and demographic data about African-Americans.

So what's new?: The essay offers a three-part framework for "the new agenda which black organizations are debating":

- the need for blacks to draw more explicitly from a long tradition of "black values that continue to sustain them";
- the need for blacks to "mobilize or, in some instances, redirect the strong self-help tradition that is hard at work but too often

hidden from public view"; and

- the need to make a logical case that outlines "the government's responsibility for disadvantaged citizens in a stable democracy and to indicate specific steps that the government should take."

The most interesting aspect of these items is their priority, for they represent nothing otherwise noteworthy. The essay focuses on the "tradition of black values" and "the self-help tradition" as the two most important

BLACK AMERICA

priorities in this new agenda. And what are the specifics of this agenda? A redesigned welfare program, a federal jobs program, an expansion of the federally-funded Head Start program, a federally-funded youth training and employment program, federal aid to elementary and middle school education and strengthening federal enforcement of anti-discrimination laws are the programmatic issues outlined in the essay.

In other words, the agenda is not new. But that the authors felt obliged to pay homage to self-help shibboleths—ideas long championed by their ideological adversaries—is significant.

"[In] recognizing the futility of inveighing against an idea whose time has come, some liberal blacks have chosen the next best thing—to co-opt it, and claim that they have been following it all along," wrote Glenn Loury in the June 1987 edition of *Commentary*. Loury, a professor of political economy at Harvard and a prominent black neo-conservative, argues that old-guard black leadership accepts "the rhetoric and terminology of self-help, [but] not its substance."

Loury is right, but he's being similarly disingenuous in rejecting the old guards' embrace—at least rhetorically—of a strategy he's long espoused. His conservative prescriptions for black progress are currently

**"We believe one-sided approaches to black progress...are simplistic and utterly inadequate."
—from *Black Initiatives and Government Responsibility***

attractive only because they've been absent for so long from the debate. Emphasizing so-called "black values" and fomenting a spirit of self-help can't do any harm; but even the most dyed-in-the-wool conservative has to admit that the wait for a new set of black values to replace the "tangle of pathology" in which the underclass is ensnared will be long. And even if black entrepreneurs could multiply in numbers enough to lift the underclass—a doubtful proposition indeed—the capital for such an entrepreneurial explosion would have to come from the federal government.

Self-help manifestly is no panacea, but civil righters have made a belated, though contrite, acknowledgement of its validity as one of many strategies for black progress. The essay urges "a judicious, concurrent and sustained mix of both black self-help efforts and public and private assistance from the nation as a whole to meet the complicated problems that have produced a so-called black underclass."

Responses: According to JCPS official Debra Davis, the report has been forwarded to black and white leaders across the country in an attempt to stimulate debate. "We're confident the essay will be on the agenda of the Black Leadership Forum when it meets [in April], and we've got the word that other organizations plan to consider and discuss it." The Black Leadership Forum is a consortium of several black service, religious, fraternal and political groups.

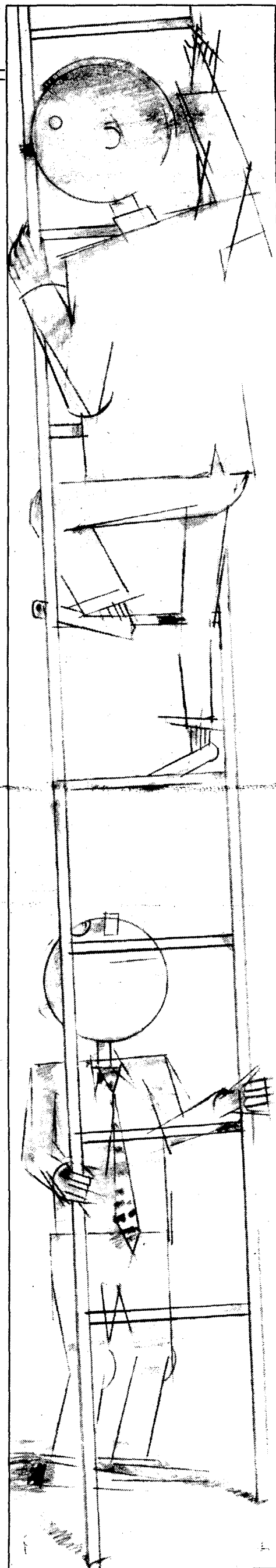
Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women and chair of the Black Leadership Forum, is reportedly the first major leader to endorse the report. "It should be required reading for every leader, policy-maker, educator, officeholder and citizen in the nation."

Similar plaudits have come from David Broder of the *Washington Post*. The essay provides "a compelling guide to the resources and needs of America's largest racial minority," writes Broder in the March 30 issue of the *Post's National Weekly Edition*. He heralds the report as a necessary attempt "to cut through the polarizing policies and rhetoric of the Reagan era and find a realistic approach to one of this society's greatest challenges."

In one of many perceptive passages, the essay focuses on the hardening of intraracial class divisions. The authors gratefully acknowledge the "genuine progress" blacks have made in recent years, but, they add, "it is precisely these achievements that make untenable the condition of the large part of the black population that remains enmeshed in a crisis of poverty. While only one-tenth of white Americans are poor today, more than one-third of blacks are trapped in poverty, many with only dim prospects for escape."

The essay urges those blacks who have benefited from the struggles of the civil rights years to create mechanisms to aid their less-fortunate brethren. "One of the most urgent needs in black organizational life is to develop bridges between the urban poor and the new middle class outside the ghetto." But the final emphasis is on the need for a federal commitment. The "inexcusable disparities between whites and blacks that continue today were not created by blacks," the authors write, "and they cannot be addressed by blacks alone."

This creeping convergence of the black movement's opposing strains was presaged in the rhetoric of Rev. Jesse Jackson, who personally embodies both the protest and self-help traditions. That other civil righters are becoming increasingly comfortable with both approaches is a sign of the African-American community's growing maturity. □



By William K. Burke

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) is due to rule soon on whether to allow continued sales of the pesticide chlordane. The chemical's critics point to evidence of blood diseases, birth defects, destruction of nervous systems and suppression of immune responses in people and animals exposed to chlordane. The critics say chlordane should be banned immediately and that only EPA inertia keeps it on the market.

Velsicol Chemical Corporation, chlordane's sole manufacturer, insists chlordane is safe if properly used. Before 1978 Velsicol marketed chlordane for spraying on farm crops and in houses and home gardens. Since then, chlordane use has been illegal except when used underground to kill termites.

EPA pesticide regulation is an open-ended process. As it receives new information the agency revises the rules governing each product. Because it regulates thousands of chemicals, however, the EPA must rely solely on studies performed by the chemical manufacturers.

In 1976 Velsicol was indicted for falsifying data that showed chlordane caused cancer in mice. Despite Velsicol's legal record, the company remains the EPA's primary source of chlordane data (see *In These Times*, Jan. 14).

The EPA is scheduled to rule soon on a study sampling chlordane levels in homes treated for termites. The EPA called for the data in 1984; Velsicol finally submitted it this winter. According to a toxicologist who has studied chlordane, the study should have taken no more than 18 months to complete.

But delays mean profits. In the 1986 *Pest Control Magazine* readers' poll, nearly 80 percent of the respondents listed chlordane or heptachlor—chlordane's close chemical relative and another Velsicol product—as their favorite termiticide. Velsicol's slow cooperation with the EPA allows the company to continue grabbing the lion's share of the \$50,000,000-a-year termiticide market.

Pesticide with a past: Nobody claims that chlordane doesn't kill bugs effectively. But no one can say precisely what composes chlordane. The compound has not been fully analyzed. It is known that chlordane always contains some heptachlor and that heptachlor always contains some chlordane. But it is the studies of chlordane's health effects, more than technical data, that have caused furious debate.

"The information we have on this stuff frightens me so much I cannot understand why it is still on the market," said Diane Baxter, a toxicologist with the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP). Baxter runs a clearinghouse for victims of chlordane poisoning, putting them in touch with lawyers and scientific experts who are willing to testify about the chemical's effects.

"We believe chlordane is the most thoroughly researched pesticide around," said Velsicol spokesman Roger Stanley. According to Stanley, neither chlordane nor heptachlor poses hazards to humans or the environment when properly applied by trained exterminators.

The company has been forced to change its claims for the chemicals' safety several times since it began chlordane production in 1947 (Velsicol first manufactured heptachlor in 1953). In 1959 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sprayed heptachlor across the southeastern U.S. to kill fire ants. Although any number of fire ants is now rec-

Chlordane: EPA inertia keeps this pesticide on the market



ognized as a minor annoyance, USDA literature at the time claimed that hordes of ants were threatening to overwhelm the South's best farmland. The ants, and Velsicol, thrived from the spraying of heptachlor, while millions of birds, racoons, helpful insects and other wildlife died.

In 1969 a Department of Health, Education and Welfare Commission urged action to prevent human exposure to all chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides, including chlordane, heptachlor, aldrin, dieldrin and DDT.

Velsicol continued to aggressively market chlordane. But the company faced a crisis in 1972 when an independent laboratory under contract to Velsicol reported to the company that chlordane caused cancer in mice.

Since chlordane, like another organochlorine, DDT, is stored in fat tissue in progressively greater concentrations as it is passed up the food chain, Velsicol executives knew that submitting this evidence to the EPA could result in a ban of agricultural uses of the chemical.

So Velsicol concealed the test results. The company's misrepresentation of the data, as well as the inherent delays of the EPA process for cancelling a legal pesticide use, resulted in a six-year delay before chlordane's home, garden and farm uses were cancelled in 1978.

In a 1972 phone conversation two Velsicol executives, Harvey Gold and Kenneth Schulz, discussed the dilemma that that data posed to the company. (A California court recently

ordered Velsicol to produce the transcribed conversation during a civil suit.)

Schulz: *Well, the thing that worries me so much, Harvey, if we submit this information, I think [then-EPA Administrator William] Ruckelshaus has no choice but to suspend the agricultural uses of chlordane and heptachlor.*

Velsicol poisons air with rhetoric

In his book *America the Poisoned*, Lewis Regenstein relates how Velsicol tried to stop publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. A Velsicol official wrote the publisher and suggested Carson's goal was "to reduce the use of agricultural chemicals in this country and in the countries of Western Europe, so that our supply of food will be reduced to East Curtain parity."

Besides patriotism, Velsicol also professes concern for the little guy. The following is excerpted from a letter sent to peanut growers during EPA hearings that led to cancellation of most uses of chlordane and heptachlor. "We intend to fight because agriculture needs these two chemicals—and our farm friends and customers need them. The poor and hungry need them."

A Velsicol statement advocating the use of pesticides to end an outbreak of mosquito-borne sleeping sickness in the Chicago area puts the company's efforts in context. Velsicol sees its products as a shield protecting Americans from the

Gold: *I agree. I agree, and I think it will happen....*

Schulz: *With great rapidity.*

The 1976 indictment for lying to the EPA listed Schulz, Gold, four other Velsicol executives and the corporation itself. But that indictment was dismissed because an EPA staff member, hired as an acting special attorney for the Department of Justice, also appeared as a witness before the grand jury. A federal judge ruled this was a conflict of interest.

Robert Birkemose, a 37-year-old airline pilot, died of a blood disease on June 4, 1980. His own doctor and the attending physician at Massachusetts General Hospital both attributed his death to chlordane exposure.

TOXIC

Birkemose's wife, Margaret, sued Velsicol, Chevron (which mixed Ortho-Klor® 72) and K-Mart. Because of the 1978 ban, Birkemose should not have been able to buy a chlordane mixture at a Massachusetts K-Mart in 1980. But he did, and he died within two months of spraying it on his woodpile.

Although both of Birkemose's doctors gave depositions asserting chlordane caused the pilot's death, his wife's attorney said Velsicol has not provided those depositions to the EPA. Failure to do so violates the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). FIFRA requires manufacturers to furnish the EPA with any new adverse information about a chemical's safety. Velsicol's 1976 indictment was under that code.

Rick Tinsworth, the director of registration at the EPA's federal office of Pesticide Programs, was unable to confirm whether Birkemose's doctors' depositions had been submitted. "I did check with a number of people and they don't recall it. That's not to say [Velsicol] didn't submit, I just don't know," he said.

Tinsworth said failures to submit the depositions might constitute a violation of FIFRA, but he emphasized that his office regulates thousands of chemicals. When informed that Velsicol had already been prosecuted for violating FIFRA, Tinsworth said,

Continued on page 22

ravages of pitiless nature. It reads, in part:

"These diseases are only one example of what can happen when nature gets the upper hand. The results can be more devastating than anything science fiction has ever dreamed up.

"DDT, aldrin, dieldrin—three major insecticides used to protect mankind as well as life-sustaining foods and animals—have been banned by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA has issued a 'notice of intent to suspend' chlordane and heptachlor—two of the safest, most effective, broad spectrum, least expensive insecticides on the market.

"The EPA, along with environmental activists groups, have released a continuous propaganda barrage to remove all pesticides from the market because of an alleged threat of extinction to certain species of birds that nature already may have marked for extinction. If only they would be as concerned about the fate that awaits the human species when these pesticides have been removed."

—W.K.B.

United Auto Workers struggle with changing times for the rank and file

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF ROBUST SALES AND profits for most of the U.S. auto industry, the nation's auto workers still have a shaky hold on their jobs. So it's not surprising that when the United Auto Workers met here for a triennial bargaining convention last week, President Owen Bieber led his wish list for upcoming talks at General Motors and Ford with four simple words: jobs and income security.

Despite the recovery from the 1982 depression, employment at Ford and General Motors is down by one-fourth, or 160,000, since the peak in 1978. Last fall GM announced cuts of an additional 30,000 and has warned of more deep slashes in domestic parts production. At the same time, both companies are turning to more foreign production of cars and parts and imports continue to grow.

The wage concessions the UAW made starting in 1979 in a dramatic about-face were widely publicized and imitated. But in recent years the UAW has been quietly accepting a fundamental transformation in its approach to collective bargaining in response to economic pressures. That has shown up especially in the rules governing work and job classifications at the local factory level, most prominently at GM. But the often obscure work changes may also entail an equally fundamental change in the UAW as a union—and possibly for what remains of U.S. industrial unionism.

Mixed signals: Underneath the ritual gathering of 3,000 bored UAW delegates, there was a rumble of doubt, confusion and, at times, anger about the shift well underway. Indeed, the international union gives mixed signals: one foot remains in its traditional bargaining stance, the other is turned toward a new model. Most of Bieber's keynote speech sounded like vintage UAW. He demanded guaranteed jobs for current workers and a halt to the rampant use of outside contractors for work UAW members have historically done—a practice known as outsourcing. He insisted as well on something like traditional wage formulas: continued cost-of-living protection and a return to regular wage increases based on productivity,

which has soared recently. (In recent years autoworkers had given up their usual 3 percent annual increases and had endorsed profit-sharing.) Bieber's other goals included creating jobs through more early retirement and a reduction of both overtime and regular working hours.

The meeting's one significant controversy erupted not over any of these national goals but over a charged word: whipsawing. In an

LABOR

unusual move, enough delegates voted to report out a separate resolution condemning the employer practice of playing one local union off against another within the same company by using the threat of job loss or promise of work in exchange for local contract changes. Ultimately, Bieber condemned the practice—which critics claim the international has tolerated—but did not allow a vote by the convention. Yet the contorted avoidance of the "w" word, as one staffer whimsically referred to it, was only the surface of a deeper controversy.

The team concept: For the past couple of years GM in particular has taken advantage of its excess manufacturing capacity to pressure local unions to agree to work rules that are more "competitive." The most drastic and common of the many changes have been radical reductions in the number of job classifications and introduction of work teams. The varied team plans typically involve organizing work around groups of six to 20 people who, with a team leader, take responsibility for organizing work in their area. The team members often rotate jobs and usually take responsibility for most inspection and repair rather than leaving problems to be caught later. Sometimes the teams even take on quasi-disciplinary functions. Management appears convinced that these changes save money and increase both quality and flexibility. Workers have been divided. But some, especially younger workers, see the changes as necessary, maybe even rewarding.

The changes also undermine the established "job control unionism" of the UAW. Traditionally senior workers would bid for preferred classifications that might be easier



UAW President Owen Bieber

or pay slightly more. The complicated, Talmudic local work rules offered workers a measure of control over their movements in the plant and protection against supervisors' abuse and favoritism. As MIT professor Harry Katz argues in his recent book, *Shifting Gears: Changing Labor Relations in the U.S. Automobile Industry*, the regular wage increases by formula, standardized classifications and legalistic local contracts all fit together to minimize competition among

The UAW would love to cooperate more with the auto companies, but is constantly jilted. "We feel we've been had," says one local official about relations with Ford.

workers and factories and to protect against never-to-be-trusted management. The arrangement served labor fairly well while the industry prospered. It may have served management at least as well—restricting the union's range of bargaining demands and validating bureaucratic "scientific management." Yet both sides also paid a price.

No clear path: The international union has not wholeheartedly pushed this shift toward a more fluid workplace. Critics contend that these new rules threaten the role of the union, as well as both seniority and solidarity. But under managerial and unemployment pressure, the UAW has acquiesced in the change. Even at this convention, Bieber was equivocal: "The point is that this international union hasn't said to the local union, 'You do have to do this or you don't have to do that.'" When workers agree to the changes, they should get something in return, he argued. Some plans worked, some didn't.

Even Donald Ephlin, GM division vice president and defender of the work teams as hav-

ing saved hundreds of jobs, said, "We have wanted participation, so certain aspects we like. I think that some of these things are management by fad at General Motors.... I don't think it really means all that much. I don't think it makes them that much more efficient. If they change their whole approach and attitude, then you'd make a change, but the agreements themselves don't do that much."

Unrequited: The UAW, it often appears, would desperately love to cooperate more with the auto companies, but is constantly jilted. This past year GM, in addition to its cutbacks, outsourcing and overseas investment, cut in half its commitment to the Saturn project in Tennessee and shifted it from small cars (the UAW agreed to a controversial team agreement there in exchange for a commitment to build small cars in the U.S.). While Ford workers collected more than \$2,000 each in profit-sharing, GM workers got nothing. But GM distributed \$169 million in executive bonuses.

GM workers aren't alone in feeling that cooperation is a one-way affair. At the Rawsonville, Mich., Ford parts plant, the local made extensive local concessions in recent years, yet it has lost 700 jobs to outsourcing since 1984. The most recent were 250 from a joint venture with General Electric to build a new blower motor. Rawsonville workers cooperated in its development in their plant, then Ford subcontracted it to GE. "We feel we've been had," local President David Schaar said.

Direct or indirect pressure has led about one-third of GM plants to accept teams and reduced classifications. "We were building some dinosaurs that we were told were going to be phased out," Arlington, Texas, local GM President Dave Perdue said. "We were told if we reopened our contract and came up with a more 'competitive' agreement, they could bring in some new product. Personally, I feel it was blackmail." The local changed its work rules and accepted a team contract. The result was a Detroit Cadillac plant was closed earlier than expected and the work shifted to Texas. "It's a sad situation," Perdue said. "It's good for us, but we're in a union and supposed to be united and all for one."

The old and the new: The old labor relations system wasn't perfect from workers' standpoint, but the new one is emerging less by conscious, coherent union design and more by reaction to company initiative and economic bludgeoning. The new system's development leaves a fractured legacy and a sense of confusion in the union.

For all its efforts at cooperation, the UAW has still not gotten corporate commitments for the job security, investment and cooperation on workers' needs that could make the changes more palatable. That frustration could blow up in this year's contracts—or against the new team model itself. In recent months there have been several local strikes essentially over either outsourcing or "team concept" problems. Although the UAW is prepared to make its case that "we've done our part" in improving quality and productivity, GM may still listen only when forced to by the union.

Yet the union seems uncertain of its power. And that is what frustrated former Assistant Regional Director Jerry Tucker, who is petitioning for a rerun of his narrowly lost regional director's race that the Labor Department found tainted. Without clearer leadership, he argues, the UAW will not be able to "rebuild our fight from the rank and file up. Leadership has to find a way to bring that energy into the battle."

south end press

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A red-green coalition breaks apart as Christian Democrats win in Hesse

By Diana Johnstone

ABILITY TO WORK OUT ITS RELATION TO THE Green Party has cost the Social Democratic Party (SPD) the government of the very heartland of the German left, the state of Hesse.

The results of the April 5 Hesse elections were very close, but disastrous for the SPD, nevertheless. For the first time since World War II, the SPD must give up the government of Hesse—a state dominated by the city of Frankfurt, West Germany's banking capital—to the Christian Democrats (CDU). The narrow "red-green" majority in the 110-seat legislature of 51 SPD and 6 Green seats gave way to an even narrower conservative majority of 47 CDU and nine Free Democratic Party seats. But the Greens gained four new seats for a total of 10, while the SPD share fell to 44.

Yet Hesse was well-governed by the SPD and, for a year, by the SPD and the Greens. The threat from business circles to flee with industry and investment in case of a "red-green" government never materialized. Hesse continues to score high in jobs, income, productivity and general prosperity. The Greens' contributions included financial relief for small farmers in distress, measures allowing foreign residents to bring their older (as well as younger) children to live with them, and decentralized, small power plants whose excess heat can be used to heat houses.

SPD Prime Minister Holger Börner's mandate to govern Hesse ran until next September. He himself broke the coalition with the Greens on February 9, bringing down his government and hastening the election. The resulting defeat is the worst in a series of Social Democratic Party disasters: bad scores in recent elections and the early resignation of party Chairman Willy Brandt last March 23.

The plutonium question: West Germany's first "red-green" coalition government fell apart over the key issue of plutonium.

In discussing the possible red-green alliance, attention has tended to focus on the split within the Greens among "realos" (realists) and "fundis" (fundamentalists). But when the Hesse coalition broke down, the worse split was among the Social Democrats. The SPD's declared policy of shutting down the nuclear power plants and keeping Germany out of the "plutonium economy" collided directly with the nuclear industry's vested interests. Attempts at compromise ended up making everybody angry.

"ALKEM is the atomic bomb in the coalition," Hesse Green Chris Boppel said last fall. It was already ticking away at the start of the coalition in December 1985, when fast-talking Green "realo" Joschka Fischer was sworn in as minister of the environment.

ALKEM (Alpha-Chemie und Metallurgie) is a plutonium fuel plant located in Hanau, near Frankfurt, and owned by the giant Siemens concern. Siemens also holds controlling interest in the two other nuclear fuel plants in Hanau, NUKEM (Nuklear-Chemie und

Metallurgie) and RBU (Reaktor-Brennelement Union). Hanau is thus the plutonium capital of West Germany. Its location in the densely populated Frankfurt area near Germany's biggest airport has caused concern for more than a decade.

In 1975 West Germany's legislation covering the nuclear industry was revised to require authorization for atomic fuel plants as well as for power plants. Safety regulations were tightened, but the Hanau plants went on as before. A couple of years ago environmentalists brought to light the scandal: the Hanau plants have been functioning all these years without the authorization required by law.

ALKEM's executives seem to consider their enterprise of such overriding national interest as to be above the law—their own or other countries'. In 1978 ALKEM told Bonn officials it had succeeded in secretly storing up to 680 kilos of plutonium in Belgium for more than two years without the knowledge of Belgian officials.

The anti-nuclear movement believes Hanau plutonium is a key element in a secret nuclear industry strategy to put West Germany on the "plutonium economy." This is the technocratic dream—and environmental nightmare—of endless power and industrial growth through fast breeder reactors, complete with an eventual nuclear arsenal (when the nuclear non-proliferation treaty runs out in 1995) provided by all that self-generating but excessively dangerous plutonium. The German left opposes the plutonium economy for political as well as environmental reasons. The inherent dangers of accident and of "nuclear terrorism" will lead—are indeed already leading—to increased police control and gradual sacrifice of civil liberties to the security obsessions of the "plutonium state."

ALKEM was thus bound to be a symbolic issue for the Greens on which compromise was not possible. ALKEM was not only part of the nuclear industry, it had been operating illegally, flouting safety regulations. And moreover, it was part of a chain leading to nuclear weapons.

As for the SPD, ALKEM showed how hard it is for a part of government, with ties to both the labor movement and industry, to

The German left opposes the plutonium economy for political as well as environmental reasons. The inherent dangers of accident and "nuclear terrorism" are leading to increased police control.

make a decisive conversion to an anti-nuclear policy. In the '70s the SPD state secretary for research, who gave his blessings to ALKEM as it went on producing plutonium without legally required authorization, was none other than Volker Hauff, who at the SPD congress in Nuremberg last August in-

troduced the bold new SPD program to phase out nuclear power in 10 years. Hauff, moreover, is from Hesse. Was his conversion from champion to adversary of nuclear power sincere? SPD policy in Hesse was bound to reflect on the credibility of the new SPD anti-nuclear program.

In Hesse, the credibility of the SPD's new policy ran straight up against its credibility as the party of the labor movement. In Hanau, ALKEM means 600 jobs. The SPD is first and foremost the party of wage-earners. If the Greens give priority to the environment over jobs, the SPD gives priority to jobs.

Hesse Social Democrats tried to evade the dilemma by pointing out that it is not the Hesse state government that issues the license to operate a nuclear plant, but the federal government in Bonn. The Greens retorted that final Bonn authorization is based on recommendations by the state of Hesse, and complained that the Social Democrats were not exhausting every recourse they had to block ALKEM.

Polarization around the issue was accentuated during the year of the red-green coalition. Green "fundis" pressured Fischer to insist that the government shut down ALKEM, while Social Democrats vacillated. **Enter the Christian Democrats:** The CDU played skillfully on the SPD's discomfort with the issue. After Chernobyl, Helmut Kohl created an environmental ministry in Bonn and summoned the mayor of Frankfurt, Walter Wallmann, to take the job. Ten years ago Wallmann led the Christian Democrats to victory in "red" Frankfurt.

The environmental ministry was excellent preparation for Wallmann's campaign in Hesse this year. His approach has been that, even if the dangers of nuclear power are not as real as people fear—or perhaps not real at all—people's fears are real, and that is the problem that must be addressed. He is there to reassure people that their safety is best looked out for by competent technocrats, not by Greens and shaggy environmentalists.

By stressing the Draconian safety regulations of the West German nuclear industry Wallmann is also helping develop a new German industrial export: nuclear safety technology. The Soviet Union is the first eager customer.

The red-green conflict over ALKEM came to a head last winter when the SPD economic affairs minister in Hesse, Ulrich Steger, refused to recommend against licensing ALKEM. Instead, as an ostensible compromise, Steger recommended limiting ALKEM to annual production of 460 kilos of a plutonium byproduct called mixed oxide fuel (MOX), claiming that this amount was harmless.

But studies by the Darmstadt Ecological Institute showed that Steger's recommendations were just right for the plutonium economy and nuclear weapons production. The Hanau citizens' initiative for environmental protection denounced Steger's recommendation as a "crafty deception."

The SPD's embarrassment deepened when Wallmann's office leaked a memo from

Steger agreeing to an increase from 460 kilos to two and a half tons of MOX.

The left of the Hesse SPD complained that Steger's position "does not agree with SPD resolutions" and "must be revised." The SPD's social affairs minister in the Hesse government, Armin Clauss, demanded a full stop to the plutonium industry right away, noting that the SPD could not keep on running after the Greens as they scored points.

Hesse Prime Minister Holger Börner tried a compromise recommending that ALKEM be authorized to process 460 kilos of plutonium a year until 1996, at which time such production must stop. This decision was intended both to conform to the SPD's

WEST GERMANY

platform for phasing out nuclear power in 10 years and to save the 600 ALKEM jobs meanwhile.

Green Environmental Minister Fischer, under heavy pressure from the "fundis" to leave the coalition, got permission from his party to give the SPD one more chance to oppose the ALKEM license. But at the same

The SPD has wavered so much that its defeat this month can be blamed on either its cooperation with the Greens or lack of cooperation with the Greens. No quarrel has been settled and there is no red-green coalition left to provide a learning experience.

time, he foresaw that Börner was "about to wreck an historic opportunity" and that the red-green coalition was breaking up "on Social Democratic loyalty to the nuclear economy."

The next day, February 9, Börner wrote to Fischer accepting Fischer's "resignation" before it had actually been submitted. Börner's reason: top priority went to saving the 600 jobs at ALKEM. Thus the first and only red-green coalition was *kaput* for the sake of 600 jobs in a plutonium processing plant.

Börner, worn out, announced that he was retiring. His finance minister, Hans Krollmann, took over to lead the SPD ticket in the April 5 elections.

After bringing down the coalition for 600 jobs, the SPD seemed to switch priorities. Krollmann indicated that the red-green coalition would be put back together after the elections. ALKEM would be opposed. The Greens were all set to enlarge their participation in the Hesse government.

The SPD wavered so much that its defeat can be blamed either on its cooperation with the Greens or on its lack of cooperation with the Greens. No quarrel has been settled and there is no red-green coalition left to provide a learning experience.

Meanwhile, Christian Democrat Wallmann, the new prime minister of Hesse, is a front-runner to succeed Helmut Kohl as the CDU's next candidate for chancellor. □

**SNEAK
PREVIEW!**
To appear nationally in May.

REFUSE AND RESIST!

"Tonight, we look out on a rising America—firm of heart, united in spirit, powerful in pride and patriotism. America is on the move!"

—Ronald W. Reagan, 1986 State of the Union Address

"Somehow Adolf Hitler was imbuing them with a new hope, a new confidence and an astonishing renewed faith in the future of their country."

—William L. Shirer, *The Nightmare Years*

Let us not mince words. A political and ideological program of "Resurgent America" is being cultivated and guided from the highest offices in the land. Its prominent themes—a "moral reawakening of the nation" and the drive for America to be Number One in the world by force of arms—have a distinctly fascist aura and raise the specter of a police state.

Some of us strongly believe in the principles and values to which this country has historically aspired; others of us find oppression and injustice to be rooted in these same principles. But ALL of us agree on the need to repudiate this new course of "Resurgent America." The transformation now taking place is not some periodic swing of the pendulum from "left" to "right," but a departure directly connected to preparations for war, repression of dissent, and promotion of U.S. global dominance and superiority over other peoples.

"America on the move" is nothing to be proud of. It has meant the "rehabilitation" of the Vietnam war and the glorification of war in general through the promotion of mindless Ramboism. It prepares and sponsors an invasion of Nicaragua, props up the Apartheid regime in South Africa, bombs Libya, seizes Grenada, labels any who resist as "terrorists," and prepares the doctrines and weapons for nuclear warfighting—with the Soviet Union identified as the "evil empire."

Domestically we see subway vigilantes made media heroes and a record of sympathy for white supremacy become the passport to high judicial office. Against women there is escalating violence, with compulsory child bearing and domestic servitude elevated as ideals. Xenophobic attacks are made on anything foreign, combined with calls for the compulsory use of English. A compassionless market economy is glorified, and for those who can't make it—tough. A new crack-pot biology champions creationism and a reactionary "sociobiology." And a new religious ideology preaches America as God's chosen people who will be "saved" in a nuclear Armageddon.

Under the call for a "war on drugs" there is a naked grab for new police and military powers. More jails and quicker executions are posed as *the* solution to "society's problems." While concern for the "rights of the accused" is deemed passé, the ability of people to defend themselves against the state is being systematically stripped away. Thought- and bedroom-police insinuate themselves. A pogromist atmosphere is whipped up around AIDS, with open calls for registration and internment. Firings, drug tests and polygraph tests stamp the message "get in line and keep your mouth shut."

In short, this "Resurgent America" seeks a fundamentalist right-wing morality imposed by the state as the vehicle to crush nonconformist behavior—political, social and cultural.

No one can afford to close their eyes to where this "Resurgent America" is heading—and thousands have already stepped forward to resist. Standing with them, we call on those who have remained silent until now to step forward before it is too late.

Twenty-seven years ago, a courageous group of 121 French intellectuals and cultural figures published a manifesto ending their adherence to the French government and its brutal colonial war in Algeria. They asked: "Are there not times when refusing to serve is a sacred duty, when treason signifies courageous respect for the truth?"

Likewise, we now declare that we renounce all allegiance to this hateful "Resurgent America" program, and encourage all others in its vociferous and determined renunciation. There can be *no* communality of purpose, healing of divisions, or coming together as one nation behind this new course. To acquiesce further in silence is to be complicit. It is not enough to hope that all of this will simply go away. There must be massive resistance.

To the Reaganites, racists, misogynists, televangelists, would-be Rambos, war planners, and America-firsters, we say *the future is not yours*. Because we see the potential of a different future, we *will* Refuse and Resist.

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Virus X, Musician, Chicago, IL
Jack Youngerman, New York, NY

First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.
Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up."

—Pastor Martin Niemöller

REFUSE AND RESIST!

National Founding Conference

NEW YORK CITY • JUNE 5-7

Concerned people and activists are coming together from across the country on June 5-7 to launch a national political and legal counteroffensive against the agenda of "Resurgent America."

The basis of unity for both the conference and the Refuse & Resist organization is: 1) the Refuse & Resist statement (above), 2) while R&R members will participate as individuals in many forms of political activity, Refuse & Resist as an organization will not endorse electoral candidates or political parties, and 3) anyone who ascribes to these two points is welcome to participate fully.

The stakes in the current situation are very high, and the vision of those who take up this struggle should be equally high. Up to this point the public discussion of the new state-enforced morality and crackdown has been far too one-sided. Our vision should be to dramatically end that, by giving a very public presence to that significant body of dissenting opinion that does exist and must grow.

Please return to Refuse and Resist, 305 Madison Ave., Suite 1166, NY, NY 10165

ADD MY SIGNATURE TO THE REFUSE AND RESIST STATEMENT FOR PUBLICATION

Signature: _____
(Required by some publications before they will accept "controversial" ads.)

I enclose \$ _____ for the publication of the statement and the development of R&R.
(Not a requirement to sign, but an average of \$40 per name is needed.)

- ☐ I am interested in the **NATIONAL FOUNDING CONFERENCE**, June 5-7, New York.
☐ I am interested in starting or joining a local Refuse & Resist group.

Name (individual or organization): _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

"For identification only" description (if space permits when statement is published): _____

By Alan Gottlieb

LEON, NICARAGUA

MARITZA ALVARADO AND HER EIGHT children live in a 10-foot square shack made of cardboard and plastic on the outskirts of Leon, Nicaragua's second-largest city. During this, the dry season, strong winds blow huge quantities of dust into the flimsy structure and cause the open fires over which she cooks to dance dangerously close to the walls.

The Alvarado family is perhaps the poorest in the shantytown neighborhood called Heroes and Martyrs of Calvarito, located two miles south of downtown Leon. It is a neighborhood similar to many that have appeared on the outskirts of Nicaragua's major cities since the 1979 revolution. A year ago the community did not exist. Then the government deeded the five-acre plot to a group of desperate people who had no homes.

Sixty-five families quickly staked claims to tiny plots of land, erecting any kind of temporary, habitable structure to reinforce their claims. Each family then became the owner of its plot.

According to Nicaraguan government officials, the stories of Nicaragua's new neighborhoods illustrate the hardships the people of this country must endure as the economy continues its war-induced nosedive. In the revolution's early years, the government had

Contra war takes biggest toll on poorest of country's poor

more resources to direct toward improving new, impoverished communities, populated by an influx of landless *campesinos*.

Today, however, with almost 60 percent of the national budget geared toward defense, the government said it can no longer afford to give substantial aid to the new

NICARAGUA

neighborhoods. Land is donated, because a gift of idle land costs nothing, officials said, and thankful residents say land is the greatest gift imaginable. But after that, residents must fend for themselves. Most are destitute and see little hope for building a wind- and waterproofed home in the near future.

"On a limited basis, we can sell subsidized building materials to the residents of the new neighborhoods," said Leonte Canales, Leon's municipal secretary. "But we suffer from a lack of this material throughout Nicaragua, so the quota that goes to these people is very limited."

No jobs in sight: Even at subsidized prices many people cannot afford building materials. In the Heroes and Martyrs of Calvarito

neighborhood, 60 percent of the residents are unemployed or underemployed, according to Julio Cesar Sandoval, the community's unofficial leader.

"Most of us have no fixed employment," said Sandoval as he squatted on the dirt floor of his one-room shack. "Those who do have jobs work at the lowest imaginable salaries." The government offers the community 80 bags of cement each month at low cost, but only half a dozen families can afford to buy them, he said. Those families have tinderbox houses rising up amid the shacks.

Alvarado, a single mother, had a cesarean section when her youngest child was born

With almost 60 percent of the nation's budget for defense, the poor must find help elsewhere.

several months ago, and the post-surgical complications have left her unable to work. Her 17-year-old daughter is the family bread-

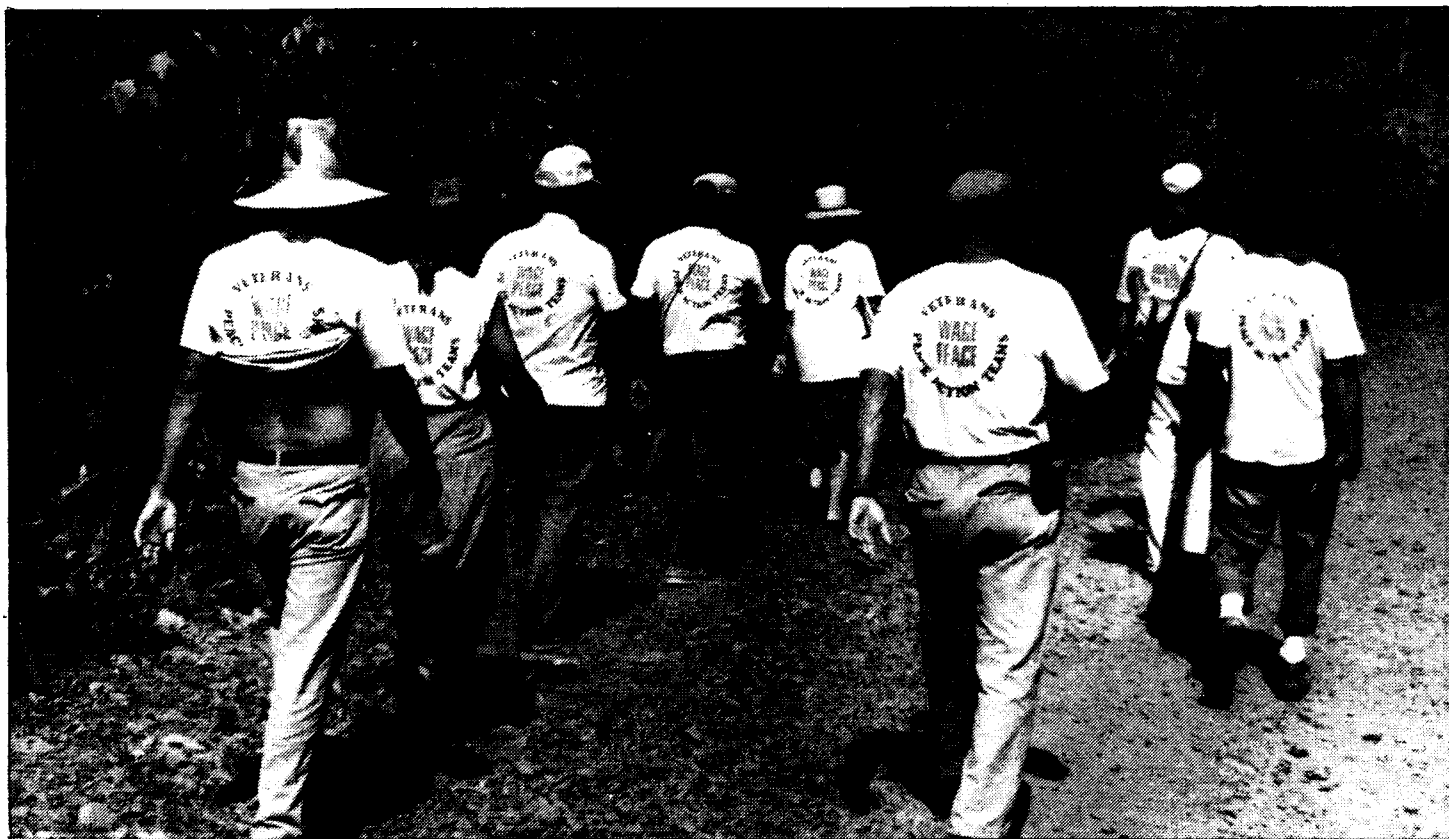
winner. She works cleaning floors at the regional office of the Ministry of Health and earns \$6 a month. The family earns some additional money selling tortillas in the streets of Leon, but it is barely enough to get by. Yet Alvarado said she is far better off today than she was a year ago: "At least I own this piece of land."

When the land was donated to the residents, the government installed two water faucets, one in each end of the community. Good, drinkable water is piped in and residents line up patiently to fill containers that they carry on their heads back home. Sandoval said it will be years before the community can afford running water for each home. As it is, each family is paying the government a small fee each month to reimburse the cost of installing the two faucets.

Electricity is even farther off in the future, according to Maritza Jimenez, another community leader. "The government tells us they need hard currency to buy the equipment to install electricity," she said. "New electrification projects are not a high priority."

Of more immediate concern at the moment is sanitation. Fewer than half the families in the neighborhood have outhouses. Those without use an open field adjacent to the community. The New Haven, Conn., Cities Project has committed itself to building outhouses for as many residents as

Continued on page 22



North American veterans on the "Walk for Peace" in Nicaragua enter the war-torn Pantasma Valley, or "Valley of the Dogs."

Veterans walk the path of most resistance

By Brad Kessler

MANAGUA

THE NICARAGUAN ROAD FROM JINOTEGA TO Wiwili is of rock and dirt and passes through a countryside of tropical forests and knife-edged mountains. The population is sparse, and the road cuts into northern Nicaragua, through the Pantasma Valley, which the Nicaraguans have begun calling the "Valley of the Dogs" due to the contra activity there. Roads in the region are not traveled after dark and vehicles must wait until 10 a.m. for contra mines to be cleared. Many Nicaraguans have been killed by mines or in ambushes over the past few months.

It was for these reasons that 10 North

American veterans last month chose to walk the 115-kilometer stretch between Jinotega and Wiwili. By walking on public roads through the war zone, the veterans planned to "accept responsibility as U.S. citizens for the acts of aggression being carried out by...the United States." In a statement given to U.S. Ambassador in Managua Harry Bergold, the veterans wrote, "If any member of our team receives injury or incurs death...we will hold personally responsible you, Ambassador Bergold, and President Reagan."

The "Walk for Peace" began March 23 and lasted for seven days. For some it was a pilgrimage with religious overtones. For others it was the realization of Dr. Martin Luther King's challenge to "get on the right side of

the world revolution." But for just about all the veterans, it was a show of solidarity with the Nicaraguans and a protest against the U.S.-sponsored war.

The 10 veterans of Vietnam, Korea and World War II walked unarmed and escorted on the road to Wiwili. The territory through which they passed is known as Region VI, an area that has been closed off for the last few months to foreign journalists and international workers, partly because four workers have already been killed on the road. What the walk provided, then, to both the veterans and foreign journalists, was an unusually close view of the war.

The march finished without injury, but not without incident. The protesters were sur-

rounded nearly every day by some form of combat. On the fourth day, there was an ambush of a military transport a few miles from where they walked: nine people were killed and another 12 injured. The vets saw many burned-out cars and trucks that had been ambushed by the contras, damaged bridges which had been mined and shells of U.S. supplied grenade launchers strewn along the road where a recent ambush had been. "Here is what looks like a very peaceful, rural area," John Isherwood, one of the veterans, said during the walk. "But at any moment someone can come out of the bushes and you're dead. It's a very odd feeling."

The peace walk marks the beginning of a continued presence of North American veterans in Nicaragua. The Veterans Peace Action Teams are now planning a joint veteran and Nicaraguan government effort to reconstruct the destroyed coffee cooperatives, schools, hospitals and buildings in Region VI. Brian Willson, a veteran not only of Vietnam, but also of last year's "Fast for Life" by veterans in Washington, D.C., hopes the reconstruction project will serve as a model for the rest of Nicaragua, as well as Central America. "We veterans will be rebuilding the structures that our government is knocking down," said Willson. Next month a new team of veterans will arrive in Nicaragua, and Willson hopes that more and more will come.

Another upcoming project will involve veterans driving ambulances in the war zones. Ambulance drivers are in demand in Nicaragua, because the risk of driving them in the war zones is great: health workers have been a major target of the contras.

Soon the rainy season will begin in Nicaragua. With it the contras' spring offensive is expected to slip into full force. This means more mining of public roads, more downing of electrical wires, more ambushes. Planning their own small strategy for the months to come, some of the veterans will fly back to the U.S. to rally for support. For as Willson remarked after the walk, "We, too, have to plan our spring offensive."

Brad Kessler is a Nicaragua-based journalist.

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 22-28, 1987 11

Chernobyl:

The anniversary that no one is celebrating

ID CHERNOBYL SIGNAL

the end of nuclear power? On the disaster's first anniversary the answer appears to be no. So far there have been few changes in nuclear policy in the European regions affected by the accident.

Thus Chernobyl highlights two realities about the nuclear industry: it moves with an inertia that is rarely influenced by current events and it wields massive political and economic influence. Walt Paterson of *The Guardian* of London reported that during last August's five-day meeting on Chernobyl of the International Atomic Energy Agency, "the mood of the delegates underwent a remarkable metamorphosis. On the Monday they were grim, gloomy and tense. By Friday they exuded bonhomie and *esprit de corps*, a global nuclear community had pulled itself together and convinced itself that it had little to worry about."

It wasn't so sure of its future immediately after the accident, however. Chernobyl caused quite a public-relations mess for nuclear apologists, leading to significant actions in places where officials were worried about safety problems or public opinion.

Most actions taken by West European governments appear to have been out of concern for the latter. For example, when the conservative and pro-nuclear Dutch government coalition found itself losing potential votes to the anti-nuclear Labor Party in an upcoming national election, the coalition declared an immediate moratorium on construction of two nuclear plants. Two weeks later it won the election. After the election a government official publicly admitted that the postponement was designed "to keep the public calm."

"It was just a matter of winning time and they recognized it openly," Thijs de la Court, an energy and development expert at World Information Service on Energy (WISE) in Amsterdam, said. "We have no doubt that by the end of the year the government will say 'OK, let's go with them again' and so the whole time they lost was one and a half years. The same will happen with most of the other countries: the government will do some research and then go ahead with the programs again. No one will lose any more than one and a half or two years on their programs."

Indeed, Chernobyl passed in several countries without their nuclear industries breaking stride. In France, where nuclear power comprises more than 65 percent of its energy, no one seriously doubted the program's viability. Last month Britain received permission to build the controversial



By Brian Jacobs

Sizewell B power plant in Cumbria, thus dealing a heavy blow to the country's anti-nuclear movement. Even in West Germany, where dissenting opinion is most vociferous, nothing has fundamentally changed concerning nuclear policy. In fact, Chernobyl has had an ironic benefit for the industry: West German companies are currently negotiating a contract worth five billion deutschmarks that would modernize the Soviet nuclear industry, according to the conservative newspaper *Bild-Zeitung*. And other West German companies are discussing selling the Soviets a series of experimental thorium high-temperature reactors.

The media's role: The media's coverage of Chernobyl contributed to the nuclear industry's ability to recoup its political losses. Western coverage was loud and quick, leaving the false impression that the dangers of Chernobyl are, by now, long gone.

Physicist John Gofman considers the media largely responsible for allowing industry to minimize the accident. He believes that the media only interviewed and quoted the officially recognized experts, accepting such "statements as 'the consensus of scientists hold this opinion' when estimating the health effects of the radioactive fallout." Generally, he added, "there is no basis whatever for such statements, since no probing was done to validate the statement that a consensus based on science and data was ever found."

For the sake of expediency and to avoid independent opinions, Gofman argued, a consensus is conjured up. The media has also begun to cite the figure of 31 fatalities (the number of Chernobyl employees and firefighters who died from acute radiation sickness) as if it represented the total number of deaths. An April 6 *New York Times* article on a fireman at Chernobyl, for example, referred to other firemen lost as "among the first of the 31 who have died as a result of the accident." In fact, some scientists estimate that between 200,000 and a half million people will die of cancer as a result of Chernobyl (see *In These Times*, Jan. 14).

According to Klaus Butjer, a Bremen physicist who publishes a monthly newsletter that lists radiation levels in various foods, "Most people in Germany think the danger is already gone; that you can't change anything and that Western reactors are much more secure than Eastern reactors. So there is little to worry about now, and therefore little changes."

But Butjer and many others maintain that the danger is far from over. Europeans will continue to receive measurable radiation doses for the next several decades, with about half the total (or whole body) dose coming from the ground (external) and the other half coming from the air and food and water (internal) (see accompanying story). Although Butjer said that not a lot can be done about external radiation, he believes internal radiation could be reduced by 95 percent if the government took a stronger stand on contaminated food. But setting radiation standards for food raises questions of economics and financial security as much as questions of public health. Radiation standards are malleable things, and the wide range of adopted standards throughout Europe indicates the relative importance of certain crops for an affected country, the relative importance of the nuclear industry in that country, or both.

Not surprisingly, after the disaster France maintained the least stringent standards in the European Economic Community (EEC) and often balked at the EEC when the com-

munity standards became intolerably strict. In West Germany states initially set their own permissible levels, so milk considered safe to drink in, say, Bavaria was banned in Hesse. The federal government has since adopted legislation concentrating such power in the hands of the minister of the environment, assuming that in the wake of the next nuclear accident permissible levels will be uniform throughout West Germany—though higher than a lot of people would like.

The new law reminds Butjer of "a special law under the Third Reich that allowed Hitler to control political issues. Only one man, one government can say what is right for me, for the measurements and so on. They are telling you to measure like this, to think like this. And they are telling you that the radiation levels are not dangerous."

"We want clean milk": In the Netherlands, the radiation issue centers around milk production, a multi-billion-dollar export industry that is central to the country's economy. Several Third World countries were shocked recently to learn that the powdered milk they have been importing from the Netherlands was contaminated. The Dutch argument that the levels were below their own domestic standards didn't suffice. The countries wanted clean milk.

To Thijs de la Court, the quondam raises this issue: "You get to the peculiar situation where you are exporting a product that you yourself find safe, but other countries don't find safe. Why do we find it safe? Because it's a consumption product we can't rule out. Because if we didn't find it safe, we would end up stopping all the agriculture here. Holland would be completely bankrupt. So in order to save that part of industry, you say, 'OK, we will accept more cancer in the population,' and then we see how the national radiation standards become based on the economy."

Similarly, France would suffer a tremendous economic blow if the government decided that radiation levels in wine were too high. De la Court asks, "Would you drink a French wine 1986? How do they control radiation levels? An important activity would be to measure all the wine for export and deter-

mine the level of becquerels per liter they contained. I imagine it would be quite a lot—and France would never give up that export; it's like our milk."

Klaus Butjer suggests that foods and drinks be labeled for radioactive content much the same way that alcohol content is labeled. "People who would like to know," he said, "would then have their choice: butter from Bavaria, from Denmark, from Ireland and so on, with X amount of radiation for each place."

Although the cancer risk to adults from consuming these products is quite small, Butjer believes the decision to assume any risk should be the consumer's.

Although Europe's nuclear industry was able to avert any major defeat as a result of Chernobyl, it may have come at a heavy cost. Public consciousness on nuclear issues has been raised tremendously; public confidence in nuclear power safety is at an all-time low.

In Britain, there has been a movement to enable local governments to monitor radiation levels because, as Barrie Lambert, a radiation biologist at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College in London, points out, "The people who did the monitoring—the Central Electric Generating Board and British Nuclear Fuels, Ltd.—have a vested interest in nuclear power. But they were the only organizations that had the monitoring equipment and the people who could use it. When they produced results, people were entirely skeptical. One would hope that, come the next Chernobyl, the local authorities will be fitted up with adequate monitoring facilities."

In West Germany the public received its information through extensive independent groups—products of the long-standing anti-nuclear movement—rather than official sources, according to Klaus Butjer. But to many European activists, the public's realization of the unreliability of a government with special interests is a cause for optimism.

Growing consensus: For most Europeans the Chernobyl accident has been relegated to the annals of history. Throughout

Europe polls consistently showed that conventional everyday worries superceded preoccupation with the accident just weeks after it occurred. Yet the general public now is decidedly opposed to nuclear power. "In Holland," de la Court said, "if you ask someone on the street, they will say, 'Oh, yeah, of course, nuclear is not good.' Eighty percent will say that."

Butjer adds, "A new movement has emerged in West Germany—the non-politically oriented. Concerned citizens such as mothers who are worried about their children are now speaking out against nuclear power."

In late April anti-nuclear demonstrations will be held throughout Western Europe: a march in London, a one-day electricity boycott in West Germany, a conference on nuclear power and radiation in Amsterdam. And political parties out of power have adopted stronger anti-nuclear positions: the Social Democrats in West Germany are pledged to a phase-out (see story on page 9), as is the Labour Party in Britain and the Netherlands. And although it is difficult to say whether they will uphold their pledges (the last power plant in Britain was ordered while Labour was in power), they clearly recognize the political advantages of such a position.

"There's a worldwide awareness that didn't exist before Chernobyl," said Anne Kirschermann, an energy analyst at WISE. "Groups are now seriously working on phase-out scenarios and I'm convinced that many more people are willing to listen. If we come up with a detailed description of how to get ourselves out of nuclear dependence and on to a different energy road, then it will happen."

Thijs de la Court added, "You can't expect a single-issue accident to have a long-term effect on a system that has multiple historical and economic layers, but if the anti-nuclear movement is able, two or three years after Chernobyl, to draw public attention, then I think things will change." □

Brian Jacobs, a writer who specializes in environmental issues, recently visited Western Europe.

Don't eat the mushrooms, lamb, reindeer...

Although post-Chernobyl radiation levels in Europe continue to fall, certain foods continue to collect and concentrate the main long-lived radiation threat, radiocesium. Mushrooms, for example, feed off the compost layer that tends to collect radiation and remain generally high in cesium. Bans on lamb from North Wales and Cumbria in Britain were extended through this spring, and many expect that lamb will continue to be a problem. "Lambs born this spring," says radiation biologist Barrie Lambert, "will have more than the artificially set government levels for cesium 137. I suspect that there will still be lamb bans going on in Wales and Cumbria late into the year."

Britain's Ministry of Fisheries and Food has so far paid out more than £2 million of the estimated £10 million farmers claim they lost as a result of the lamb restrictions.

According to the World Information Service on Energy (WISE) in Amsterdam, Swedish national radio recently announced that the radioactivity level in reindeer slaughtered in northern Sweden was seven times greater than that in September—from 6,000 becquerels per kilogram (Bq/kg) to more than 42,000 Bq/kg.

By comparison, radioactive powdered milk from Bavaria caused a scandal earlier this year when it was found to contain about 6,000 Bq/kg. The entire culture of the Lapp people in northern Sweden has been threatened by restrictions on reindeer meat, which is their food staple. Currently Sweden is considering following neighboring Finland's lead and relaxing the restrictions so that the meat may be consumed instead of discarded.

Elsewhere in Europe, as farmers harvest their spring crop of contaminated vegetables, the level of radioactivity in the food chain will increase. Thijs de la Court of WISE said, "People think Chernobyl is something of the past. It should be very clear that Europeans are going to have to live with contaminated food products."

So far, post-Chernobyl rates of infant and fetal mortality, as well as birth defects, are a guarded secret in both halves of Europe. Reports of fetal deaths and mongoloidism clusters have surfaced, but a causal link to Chernobyl is essentially impossible to prove. According to Bremen physicist Klaus Butjer, "The official scientists are collecting health data on Chernobyl, but they're not using it. We have an unprecedented opportunity to

look at the effects of low-level radiation, yet no epidemiological studies are being done. They don't like the idea of examining this issue."

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an autonomous branch of the United Nations, disqualified itself from conducting any post-Chernobyl health research in Europe, claiming that all of the disaster's health effects were confined to within the Soviet borders. According to the agency, about 5,000 Soviets will die from cancer over the next 70 years due to low-level radiation exposure.

In contrast, independent physicists like Karl Morgan and John Gofman estimate that between 200,000 and a half million cancer deaths will occur. If the IAEA figures are to be believed, then it is difficult to understand, as the French journal *La Gazette Nucleaire* commented recently, "why it was necessary to evacuate 135,000 people around Chernobyl, and why these people cannot return to their homes a year after the accident." Moreover, it is difficult to understand why it was necessary for all of "unaffected" Europe—east and west—to impose food restrictions, some of which remain in effect a year later.

—B.J.

EDITORIAL

Daniel Ortega



Chun Doo Hwan

East is East and West is West

When is a principle not a principle? When it is mouthed by the Reagan administration. How do we know this? Because the "principles" it proclaims apply only when they are convenient and are applied only selectively for their public-relations effect.

The most recent example of this occurred last week in reaction to South Korean dictator Chun Doo Hwan's announcement that there would be no constitutional reforms that might provide his opponents a chance to win the elections scheduled for 1988. Did this denial of democracy outrage the administration? No.

The methods by which South Korea chooses its leaders, the administration explained, is an "internal matter." That being so, "We have no position on Korean constitutional reform," the assistant secretary of state for East Asian affairs said. "That is a decision for the Korean people to make."

How benign. And how this statement of principle must have warmed the heart of Daniel Ortega and his fellow Sandinistas. They were under the misapprehension that this administration was unfamiliar with the idea of self-determination. Could they have been wrong? Is it only their imagination that Reagan has not only been trying to force them to adopt his method of choosing their leaders, but even telling them whom to include in the leadership of their nation? Or was this latest statement of "principle" by the administration just another example of the low regard it has for the intelligence of the American people?

Only Reagan's face will be lost

The Democrats in the House of Representatives have now passed their own budget. Republicans refused to participate in the process, and none voted for it (19 Democrats also voted against the budget resolutions, but it passed 230-192). Not even the Republicans voted for President Reagan's budget proposal, which was defeated by a 27-394 vote.

The House budget as passed differs from the president's in its priorities, though only marginally. Military spending authorization for 1988 in the House resolution, for example, is \$288.7 billion—\$8.75 billion less than the current budget (adjusted for inflation) and \$23 billion below Reagan's request. Similar cuts, proportionately, were made in foreign aid, especially military aid, and science and space research. Social spending, on the other hand, is greater in the House resolution than the president wanted. Welfare authorization is \$7.5 billion more, education and social services \$7.35 billion greater and spending for agriculture, housing, transportation, community development and health are all significantly higher than in Reagan's budget.

In total outlays for 1988, as in budget authority (the amount that

may be obligated but not necessarily spent in 1988), the Democrats' budget is close to Reagan's, but the president's budget would produce a deficit of \$134 billion to the House budget's \$108 billion. That's because the House budget would increase tax revenues by \$25.5 billion, while Reagan, almost alone, continues to oppose any tax increase.

The differences between Reagan and the Democrats are, of course, not fundamental. They are differences between the traditional corporate liberals, who understand the necessity for a degree of social democracy in order to assure social peace, and the more ideological and greedy right-wingers who want to get as much as they can for the wealthy without regard for the long-range stability of our corporate system.

But the House Democrats are a mixed bag. Among them are many members whose loyalty to the needs of their constituents is greater than to their corporate funders. And this year, as in years past, they had a budget resolution for which to vote that more clearly distinguished them from their colleagues. It was the budget of the Congressional Black Caucus, which was defeated by a vote of 56-352—not an impressive show of support, but better than twice that given to Reagan.

The Black Caucus budget differed from the one passed in much the same way that the adopted budget differed from Reagan's. Yet in context it more clearly reflected a different set of social priorities. Thus military outlays in the Black Caucus budget were \$20 billion less than in the Democrats' budget (and \$43 billion less than Reagan's request), while spending for Medicare was \$27 billion more than the House resolution. The Black Caucus budget also called for substantially higher outlays for housing, education, welfare, mass transit and community development, while cutting military foreign aid. All but two members of the Black Caucus voted for the Caucus budget: Mike Espy of Mississippi and Budget Committee Chairman William H. Gray of Pennsylvania voted present. The Caucus was joined by 37 white members. In short, the Black Caucus budget reflected the needs not only of blacks, but of working people in general, as well as those concerned about American intervention abroad and the militarization of our economy at home. It was in content, if not in intent, strikingly similar to the proposals of Rev. Jesse Jackson.

The next step in the budget process is up to the Senate, which is less Democratic and more in line with the administration, especially on the issues of military and social spending. Senators will likely be pressured to work out a compromise between conservatives and liberals under which a Republican-supported tax increase will be traded for more money for the Pentagon and its suppliers. Given the composition of the Senate and the timidity of many House members, the chances of a final budget looking like the House version are not bright. To preserve the cuts in military spending and retain even the paltry gains in social spending will require massive popular pressure on Congress. We'd like to see it, but we're not optimistic.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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LETTERS

No tirades here

GETTING A BOOK REVIEWED IS FREQUENTLY LIKE watching the movie *Rashomon*. The same incident is described four different ways by four different characters. Did Daniel Lazare (*In These Times*, March 25) read the book I wrote?

He called it "a tirade." Against whom? He gave no examples. In the jacket blurb I warned that *Jews in America Today* would antagonize not just Zionists but all the Jewishly engaged. Lazare liked my earlier book, *Zionism in the Age of Dictators*, which accused Zionists of collaboration with Hitler. Absent any explanation of his present objections, I must presume he demurs from my further denunciations of liberalism for its collusion with Zionism. But let's ask him if this is a tirade?:

A few plain truths are in order here. As the Jewish scriptures would put it, the Democratic Party goes toward murder "as sparks to heaven fly." These hacks oppose the PLO for only two reasons: The Palestinians are the oppressed and they are conscious imperialists; the PLO terrorizes Jews and Jews are their moneybags.

Lazare says I "seem uncertain why [I] should focus on American Jews as opposed to, say, American tennis players." Tennis players are not the richest ethnic and/or religious group in the U.S. Jews are crucial to the Democrats' finances. Therefore, I asked of the Jews' vaunted liberalism, just *Who is a liberal? Someone who opposed Johnson and Humphrey and Carter and Mondale and their murders in Vietnam—and voted for them, felon after felon.... As the discussion is of Jews, an Old Testament proverb—26:11—is appropriate. Truly, the far-seeing prophet had them fully in mind when he set quill to scroll, for indeed, "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."*

Instead of this, Lazare would have had me devote the book to the "central issue" which is?—anti-Semitism! In fact, I did write 30 pages on "Anti-Semitism from Nazis to nutsies." But I did the miraculous. I agreed with the Anti-Defamation League. They do constant polls. Anti-Semitism is dropping like a shot. The Nazis are splintered into isolated collections of nutsies. But this does not please our Marxist. The economy is going to collapse and guess who is going to lead the SS to power? "A strong man of the Pat Buchanan type."

Jews and Pat Buchanan Tomorrow would be a hard book to sell to a publisher, but Lazare is welcome to write it. In the book I did write, I explained that many Jews have always been convinced Nazism is coming again. In the left version of this wacko script, the Depression hits, and the bosses call Central Casting for a Shickelgruber. But the Jews play the prodigal and return to the left. Then they and their black cleaning ladies build barricades on West End Avenue and the storm troops are beaten off.

A lot of Jewish lefties either grew up with or later accepted the notion that persecution made the bulk of Jews into progressives. Today they are neither. But not to worry, they will be.

Lazare accepts the bizarre notion that history repeats itself, exactly. But no one is expecting another Hitler in Germany. Why should we here? Hitler fed on deep

anti-Semitic traditions. Millions of peasants already saw the Jews as Christ-killers. Today 28 percent of American youths don't even know that Easter commemorates the death of Jesus, much less do they know or care who killed him.

Fascism works with existing prejudices. I showed that when Mussolini started adding anti-Semitism to his early message, his followers made him give it up as the Jews were not unpopular in Italy. Now Lazare tells us that Howard Beach and Forsyth County, Ga., show that the Jews are in danger. Bullshit. I know Howard Beach. Blacks were attacked. If three Jews wearing yarmulkas walked into the same place, nothing would have happened. Are there any Jews in Forsyth County? I don't know. However, if any moved in, the KKK might burn a cross, but there would be no mass support for a demonstration against Jews even in one of the most anti-black areas in America.

It has been said that more nonsense has been written about Jews, by Jews and non-Jews alike, than on any topic in human history. And truthfully, Lazare's piece is a case in point. It was not about real anti-Semitism, and still less was it about my book. In fact, it was a perfect example of why I had to write *Jews in America Today*.

Lenni Brenner
Berkeley, Calif.

Dan Lazare replies: Yes, I read Lenni Brenner's *Jews in America*—twice—although judging from his bizarre reply I doubt Brenner read my review. His letter is devoted to rebutting arguments I never made. I did not say that history necessarily repeats itself, that Nazism will rise again or that a resurgence of anti-Semitism will send Jews rushing back to the left. I did say that four decades after the Holocaust it is impossible to write off the danger of renewed anti-Semitism. I also argued that today's comparatively liberal racial climate cannot last forever, and that if old-fashioned political racism makes a reappearance all minorities would suffer.

Since Brenner brings him up—and completely misinterprets his significance—Mussolini is a good example of how this would work. True, anti-Semitism was not central to Italian fascism. But Italian fascist ideology was fundamentally racist, and once Hitler seized power in 1933 an alliance between the two main wings of European fascism was inevitable. And, indeed, in 1938 Mussolini instituted his own anti-Semitic laws modeled on Germany's.

As for the rest, is Brenner really so vulgar as to believe that the Democratic Party's

support for the state of Israel can be reduced to a question of Jewish political contributions? Israel is central to post-war American ideology. The U.S. believes it defeated Nazism singlehandedly and points to Israel as evidence that it rescued the Jews. But it didn't. The U.S. didn't save them but merely thrust them into a new war zone. After the war, most displaced Jews greatly preferred to come to the U.S. But they were denied admission and Palestine became one of few options open to them.

Beverly Hills smokers

MARK NICHOLS' LETTER (APRIL 1) ABOUT THE Beverly Hills ordinance prohibiting smoking in restaurants contains a series of fallacious arguments. Most of them (such as his comparison of cigarettes to candy bars, and the statement that smoking is an "indulgence" that people eventually outgrow) do not merit debate because the counterarguments are obvious.

One point, however, calls for a response. Nichols' reference to the ordinance as a "righteous prohibition" echoes the self-serving obfuscation propagated by the tobacco industry. The real purpose of this ordinance is not to "prohibit" smoking per se, but to regulate air quality. As far as I know, it does not prohibit smoking in homes, private automobiles, in the open air or in a multitude of other places (and that is as it should be). It simply prevents people from creating a general health hazard in specified public places, and as such is no different from hundreds of other laws currently in force.

Joseph Demboski
Seattle

Honduras and the contras

WILLIAM I. ROBINSON'S ARTICLE ON GROWING opposition to the contras in Honduras (*ITT*, March 18) tells an important story, deserving much more attention than it has gotten in the mainstream press. In general, Robinson's report was accurate, but I was disturbed at certain details that seemed hyped for rhetorical effect.

The offending paragraph was the following: "On March 5 at least 20,000 people marched through the streets of Tegucigal-

pa, demanding the expulsion of the contras from Honduras. The demonstration was unprecedented in its size and militancy."

I witnessed the March 5 demonstration with several journalists, including Marjorie Miller of the *Los Angeles Times* and Carlos Ramos, who writes for the progressive Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*. These journalists made a rough count of the demonstration, coming up with 1,500 and settling on 2,000 as a safe, relatively generous estimate. This looked right to me; I have been to enough demonstrations to know this one was nowhere near 20,000 people. (In Robinson's dispatches for Agencia Nueva Nicaragua, as printed in the Nicaraguan papers the following week, the march swelled to "tens of thousands" of Honduran citizens.)

The journalists I was with were also told by march organizers that, while the demonstration was on the large side, it was not the largest of many anti-contra demonstrations they have held. As for the "most militant"—that is basically rhetoric. The tone of many of the marchers seemed civil to me, perhaps reflecting the fact that opposition to the contras is shared by so many Hondurans.

All of this may seem like nit-picking, since I don't disagree with the thrust of Robinson's story. But it seems to me that "hyped" otherwise accurate stories—if that is indeed what is going on here—is a bad habit for left journalists to fall into.

Daniel C. Hallin

Author of *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*
San Diego

William Robinson replies: Honduran police put the number of demonstrators at 10,000. March organizers from the Coordinating Committee of Popular Organizations placed the crowd size at over 30,000. Such estimates were widely cited by international wire services.

Bizarre

"LISTEN," SAID ALLEN SIMPSON, WYOMING, THE Republican number two man in the United States Senate, "I'm 55 years old and can still change. That man over there is 76. He is not going to change."

There are a number of us who are older than both Simpson and Our Leader in every state of the Union, who knew a decade ago he was selected because he could be elected, not because he could distinguish bizarre from magnetic or geographical north poles.

D. Hare Hansen
Green Bay, Wisc.

SYLVIA



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SUSAN IS ARRANGING ALL HER SPICES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER WHEN HER HUSBAND COMMENTS THAT IT'D BE NICE IF SHE COULD EARN A LIVING. SUSAN'S HURT FEELINGS BRING OUT HER LATENT VOLUNTEERISM, AND SHE PHONES A HOSPITAL TO OFFER HER HUSBAND AS A TRANSPLANT DONOR.



by Nicole Hollander

By John Atlas

HARDLY A WEEK GOES BY THAT SOME PUNDIT doesn't warn the Democrats that they must "move to the center" to change their image and win back the White House. The accepted wisdom is that the Democrats must drop their identification with "special interests" like labor, blacks and women and their addiction to taxing and spending for domestic programs.

But the success of a rising political star who is being mentioned as a candidate for president or vice president belies this conventional wisdom.

It is 1981 and this candidate for governor wins by the narrowest of margins in a major rust-belt state. Obviously, if he is going to win re-election in 1985 he will have to broaden his appeal. What did he do for the next four years?

For the poor and their sympathizers, he increased social welfare programs like the despised Aid to Families with Dependent Children. For teachers, he increased school aid and guaranteed a minimum starting salary of \$18,000 a year. For labor he signed an extravagant transportation bond issue. For women, he created a commission on—of all things—sex discrimination in statutes.

For environmentalists, he signed a stiff toxic chemical "right-to-know" law and called 1985 "the year of the environment." For blacks and Hispanics, he appointed the first Hispanic and then a black to a statewide Public Advocate post, and signed a bill divesting state funds from companies doing business in South Africa before this became a national issue. For the peace movement, he co-chaired the Nuclear Freeze campaign. And to top it all off, he socked it to the middle class by raising the income tax for people who earned over \$50,000 in order to help pay for a state budget that increased 60 percent in four years.

This tax-and-spend liberal didn't stop there. He makes a "horrendous mistake" when he runs for re-election by actively seeking the endorsement of the AFL-CIO, the teachers union and a black leader like Coretta King.

Who is this out-of-touch Democrat? Why he's no Democrat at all. It's New Jersey's Republican Gov. Tom Kean—who, responding to organized grassroots pressure, did all those unthinkable things. And it was Tom Kean who got re-elected in a landslide in 1985 capturing a majority of the vote in every county and city.

Democratic establishment is on the wrong track

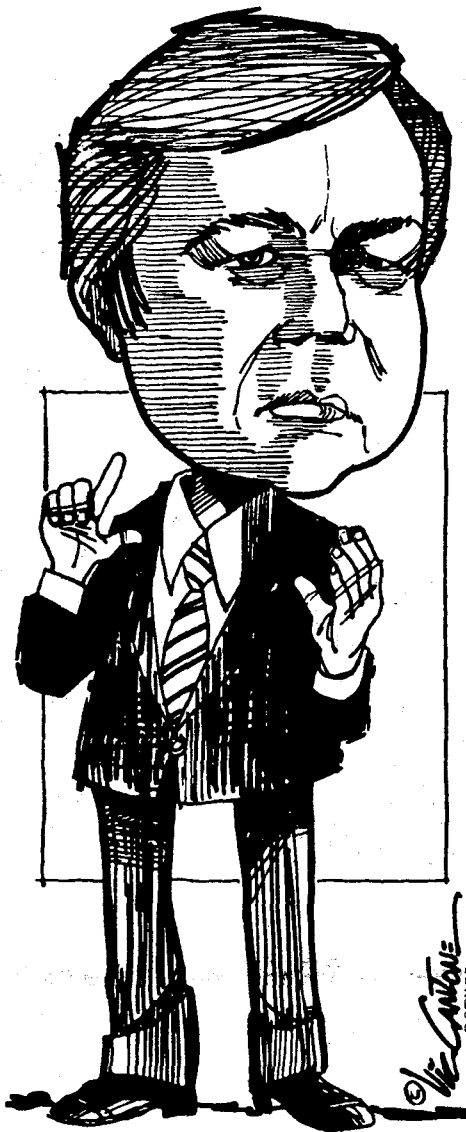
While the Democratic Party establishment tries to distance itself from organized labor, blacks and women, a Republican governor embraces them.

Changing times: The New Jersey election is one piece of mounting evidence that, while people may call themselves moderate or conservative, progressive ideas still flourish. In their book *Right Turn: The Decline of the Democrats and the Future of American Politics*, Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rodgers use polling data to show that despite the personal popularity of Ronald Reagan Americans remain "programmatically liberal." Indeed, the trend in public opinion over the past generation has been toward the left. They reported that "during Reagan's first term the public increased its support for regulatory and social programs." The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* polls consistently showed that two-thirds of the electorate think the national government should spend more money on Great Society programs to help the poor. A large majority of Americans continue to demand that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid be left intact, that military spending be curtailed to help cut the budget deficit, and that government should reduce the gap between rich and poor.

Even David Stockman concedes "American democracy made a shambles of my anti-welfare state vision.... The electorate wants moderate social democracy to shield it from capitalism's rougher edge."

It is not the peace, labor, women and civil rights activists who caused Democrats to lose favor. It is the party establishment—the people who staffed the Carter administration and advised Walter Mondale—the Washington, D.C., lawyers and lobbyists and business leaders, the real special interests in the Democratic Party—who are to blame. They represent some of the most powerful interests in the nation. By their very nature, they resist change and cling to the failed policies of the past because those policies served their interests.

By the end of his first term, every one of Jimmy Carter's populist policies had been twisted by the "centrists": progressive tax reform gave way to tax cuts for business



THOMAS KEAN

It's not the peace, labor, women's or civil rights groups that have caused Democrats to lose favor. The electorate wants moderate social democracy.

and the affluent. A pro-conservation and alternative energy policy gave way to the synfuels corporation and a full-employment Humphrey-Hawkins bill gave way to 7.4 percent unemployment.

The Party's own worst enemy: Now, these same centrists say Democrats must support military spending to show they are tough on defense, and cut domestic spending to show they are fiscally responsible. But by seizing upon domestic budget cuts as a cure for the deficit, they cast the political base of the Democratic Party as the enemy.

Trying to reconcile the interests of traditional Democrats—standing for the ordinary person and less for the rich and powerful—with an austerity program will lead the Democratic Party to self-destruct.

To succeed, Democrats must stand for closing the rest of the tax loopholes for the rich, reducing defense spending and direct public funds for good jobs, universal health

care, mass transit, child care and affordable housing; programs that bring together rather than divide white working-class and black constituencies.

Why is the Democratic Party moving to the middle of the road when nothing is there but a yellow line and potholes? Partly to accommodate the party's need for big bucks. The growth of business PACs has produced ideological havoc among Democrats who used to depend largely on labor and liberal fundraising. After the so-called Watergate campaign reforms, the contributions to congressional Democrats have become almost equally split between labor/liberal and business/trade association contributions.

Partly because of the weakness of the organized left. Last year's large gatherings in Washington, D.C., of New Directions and the Rainbow Coalition provides some evidence this may change.

The dramatic growth of Citizen Action is another sign of hope. Founded in 1979, Citizen Action is a nationwide progressive federation of 24 affiliated state organizations, with more than two million members, 85 offices, 870 staff and a combined budget of over \$18.5 million.

Citizen Action has passed landmark state legislation on such issues as no shut-off politics for utilities (14 states), community right-to-know laws disclosing toxic hazards (10 states) and prescription drug assistance programs for seniors (four states). It is spearheading efforts to pass precedent-setting legislation on such matters as utility rate reform, toxic cleanup, insurance sunshine laws and consumer representation on health-care costs.

Nationally, Citizen Action was in the forefront of the successful fight for the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund, in opposing gas-price decontrol and has recently launched a health-care campaign centering on access to care, the cost of care and the quality of care.

Last year in Chicago more than 1,500 community organizers, trade unionists, senior citizens, elected officials and activists from tenants, minority, women, church and peace groups from all across the nation met on July 25 at their annual conference to explore ways of organizing a progressive majority around issues such as home-ownership, child care and flexible work places for working parents.

On February 27 a Democratic Socialists of America-inspired conference called Democratic Alternatives in Albany, N.Y., had strong support from Communication Workers of America, District 1, AFSCME, District Council 37, the United Auto Workers and other unions. This is the first in a series of conferences around the country designed to develop a politics built around traditional left values of justice, peace and equality.

Irangate, a Democratic Senate and the growth of progressive organizations should give the left encouragement for 1988. An increasing awareness that the American people have *not* moved to the right, however, provides the most hope for the future, and, hopefully, a lesson for Democrats.

John Atlas is a public interest lawyer and officer in Hackensack-based New Jersey Citizen Action and the New Jersey Tenants Organization. An editor of *Shelterforce*, a national housing magazine, he has written for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Nation*, *Progressive* and other publications.

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VIEWPOINT

By Hillel Schenker

JONATHAN J. POLLARD IS CONVINCED that he was "the eyes and the ears of Israel over a geographical area that reaches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean." His wife, Ann Henderson Pollard, in the course of a dramatic recreation of "the scene of the crime" shown on Israeli television said that the information that Pollard supplied to Israeli intelligence "saved Israel from destruction." Pollard's lawyer, Richard Haihy, said in an interview on Israeli radio that his client had not only a deep commitment to the state of Israel's continued existence, but also to "its victory over its enemies."

All of this really sounds like the stuff heroes are supposed to be made of.

The only problem is, in the immortal words of Tina Turner in *Mud Max and the Thunderdome*: "We don't need another hero" (a song that has been in the top 10 on the Israeli hit parade).

No one, of course, is suggesting that Israel should unilaterally beat its swords into plowshares. As we all know, the Middle East is a very volatile place, and Islamic fundamentalism, an implacable foe of Arab accommodation with Israel, holds sway in Iran and is gaining ground in Lebanon and Egypt. The possibility that Syria might follow Anwar Sadat's 1973 example and initiate a limited war as a catalyst for a political process that could lead to the return of the Golan Heights also can't be ruled out. In such circumstances, Israel has no alternative but to maintain a strong army to defend itself.

But it is stretching things much too far to claim that Israel has to rely on a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst to know what is happening "between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean." While Israeli observers who say that Pollard provided only "a pile of paper" are undoubtedly understating the situation, those who claim he was "a master spy" are exaggerating in the opposite direction. Some of the information that he provided was quite useful. Yet most Israeli political and military commentators agree that it couldn't be weighed against the damage caused to Israeli-American relations and to relations between Israel and the American Jewish community, which are far more important to the country than knowledge of the exact location of Libyan anti-aircraft batteries—information that can be obtained from other sources.

The Pollards may genuinely have believed that they were "saving Israel from destruction." They obviously didn't read a recent report published in Egypt stating that the Arabs no longer have a serious military option against Israel.

No victory possible: As for their commitment to Israel's "victory over its enemies," even the far right in Israel doesn't delude itself with the idea that the Israeli armed forces could possibly achieve "a victory" over its enemies. The most they hope for is the ability to hold off the neighboring Arab states until they resign themselves to making peace on terms dictated by the right-wing Likud Party and its allies, i.e. the acceptance of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights as integral parts of the state of Israel.

For close to 40 years Israeli officials have preferred to mobilize support and sympathy for Israel by stressing its vulnerabil-

SOME PEOPLE ARE CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF THE POLLARD SPY CASE



THIS CLAMOR IS HYSTERICAL AND UNJUSTIFIED



WE HAVE ALREADY IDENTIFIED THE CULPRITS AND TAKEN APPROPRIATE ACTION



WE PROMOTED THEM



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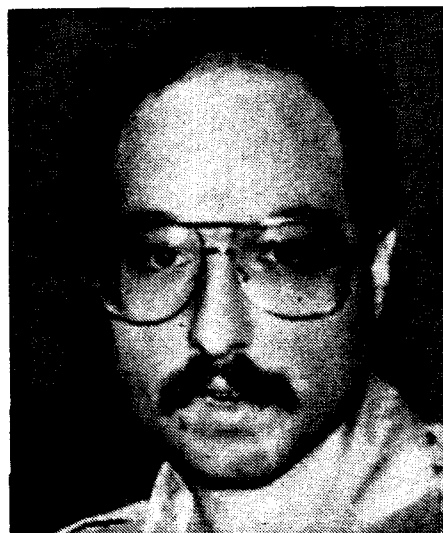
Israelis dislike Pollard's Rambo mentality

ity. And so people like the Pollards undoubtedly are genuinely convinced that Israel might be destroyed tomorrow.

When Pollard was a youth, he stood on the site of a Nazi concentration camp in Europe and vowed to himself that he would do everything possible to ensure that such a calamity would never again happen to the Jews. He wasn't the only one who responded that way.

Today, despite all its problems, Israel is a strong country, with a troubled but rooted economy and society, backed by a very powerful military capacity.

The greatest danger facing Israel today is not the threat of military aggression from its neighbors, but rather the threat inherent in the continued occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with their 1.5 million Palestinians and the lack of a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One prominent Israeli observer recently said: "If we annex the West Bank we will have a bi-national country, or an Arab majority, and the conflict will be transformed from a political conflict to an ethnic one. We will have a 'Belfastization' of the Israeli-Arab conflict that will be totally irresolvable. It will be real hell." And he concluded: "If we don't change our policies, we'll be on the road to national suicide." That observer was none other than Professor Yehoshafat Harkabi, a former head of Israeli intelligence. Harkabi and many other Israelis believe that politics, not intelligence, is the crucial factor in Israel's future.



Jonathan J. Pollard, a fading hero in Israel

If Jewish and non-Jewish Americans want to help Israel, they can support the forces in Israel working for a peaceful, political resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As American citizens, they can also lobby for a greater American mediation in the quest for a comprehensive Israeli-Arab peace. The one thing that Israel doesn't need is a spy who is convinced that he is providing a crucial service, both to Israel and to the U.S., when he transmits confidential information to Israeli officials.

Pollard's actions were interpreted by moderate Arab countries as an American betrayal of trust. This clearly goes against the American interest. It is also against Israel's interest, since the long-term Israeli interest is that the U.S. (and the Soviet

Union, too) have good relations with both sides, so that it can help resolve the conflict.

If Pollard or any other American Jew wants to contribute directly to Israel's security, he is welcome to exercise the individual Jewish right to come to live in Israel and, like any other male citizen, to serve an average of one month a year in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) till the age of 54.

Fading Rambos: Paul Newman has finally won an Oscar, but it was not for the role of Arie Ben-Canaan in *Exodus*. Jonathan Pollard probably liked that role and wanted to emulate it. The heroics of *Exodus* may suit the fading Rambo mentality of many Hollywood producers, but Israelis never were very taken with the movie, or with the original book by Leon Uris, which was always considered a kitschy version of Israeli history. The movie that was ranked number-one by Israeli critics in 1986 and was the country's choice for the Oscar candidacy this year was a film called *Avanti Popolo*, a powerful anti-war film that focuses on the trials and tribulations of Egyptian and Israeli soldiers in the final stages of the Six Day War. *Avanti Popolo* is highly recommended for any would-be Pollards.

Perhaps I have been too hard on Pollard. After all, he was mobilized by Israelis. The Israeli leadership claims that it knew nothing about the affair. But this consistent lack of knowledge in the Pollard affair, Irangate, the General Security Services affair, Israeli-South African relations, etc., has been the target of barbed satirical columns throughout the Israeli press. "It is with no small amount of pride that we can say that there isn't a single state in the free world where its citizens know so much about what its leaders don't know," wrote former editor Shalom Rosenfeld in the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*. But that's another story. ■

LIFE IN THE U.S.

By Norman Atkins

LIVING COMFORTABLY BEYOND HIS means, unable to foot the monthly mortgage on a swank Midtown Manhattan co-op, a promising young screenwriter of Harvard polish has recently piled up a cumbrous debt. So when his shrink suggested a few weeks ago that he stop by a meeting about a too-good-to-be-true route to some easy dough, Harvard was psyched.

The shrink explained the rules of "Airplane," the trendy new pyramid scheme that had just hit New York after sweeping the land the past six months. For only \$1,500, Harvard could buy one of eight seats on a strictly fictional Airplane—a metaphor chosen, no doubt, for its cultural resonance in the Age of the Frequent Flyer. Once the seats were filled, Harvard would become one of four crew members on Airplane II; after helping to entice eight

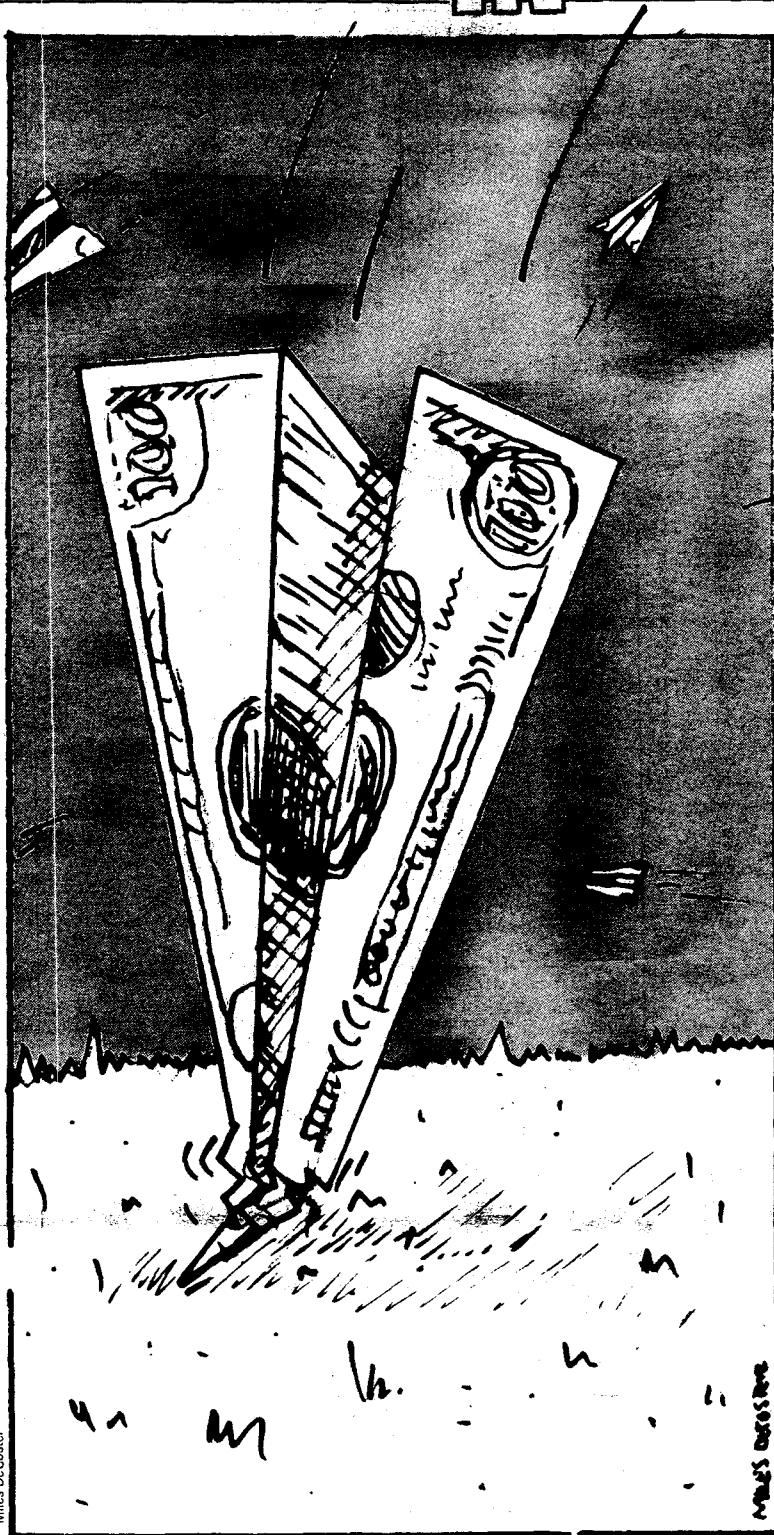
AVARICE

friends and relatives to pony up \$1,500 themselves, he would become co-pilot of Airplane III; following the same procedure he would eventually pilot his own Airplane IV; and then he alone would collect \$1,500 from each of the eight new passengers and fly out of the game with \$12,000, a handsome 750 percent profit.

Harvard and his wife, an aspiring artiste, went to the shrink's Airplane meeting. Artiste was especially enthused by the mystico-capitalist New Age rap the shrink's people delivered, obviously parroting the Californians who putatively started the game and brought them on board. They explained that this was an ideal way for young, un-9-to-5 artistic folks such as Harvard and Artiste to escape the Yuppie Wall Street Job Trap to which some of their friends had succumbed. It was only fair that those of noble artistic ambition would earn some easy money to subsidize their creative vocations.

Hey, this was just what Harvard and Artiste had been thinking themselves. So she convinced her rich grandma to front them the \$1,500, and she and Harvard would work on getting their pilot's wings by letting their many artsy friends in on this terrific opportunity.

I have a friend who is one of their friends, and I asked if he would bring me to a meeting at their co-op. I had heard about Airplane the previous week and when my roommate, whose intelligence I respect, came home one night all excited about the scheme, I became curious. How could this obviously illegal, immoral and age-old "Greater Fool Theory" Pyramid Scam have managed to gather a quasi-cult-like following among such a well-educated, affluent group?



Plane greedy yuppies attempt a cash landing

A little turbulence: My girlfriend and I arrive at the money-sucking Harvard/Artiste co-op a little late and soon realize we are prime targets of the pitch. A soap opera writer, boasting about her \$100,000-a-year salary, is very hard-sell. "So are you going to do it?" she says after little explanation. "If you don't decide by tomorrow, someone else will take your seat."

A plump yuppie actress in a green bandana is more mellow. She is wearing a red Airplane earring to get into the spirit of the game—her lucky charm. "If you're a good networker and have the right friends," she says, "you could fly out of the game in a week. If you don't, you may hit some turbulence."

Basically, she says, all I have to do is convince my pals that they could make a lot of money by convincing their pals that they could make a lot of money by convincing their pals of the same proposition.

Her come-on echoes that sicko Fabergé shampoo TV commercial, a classic bit of crowd manipulation. "I told two friends, and they told two friends, and so on, and so on, and so on."

Then there is a prominent New York pol's kid, who Harvard has coaxed into the game against her better judgment. If the *New York Post* ever linked her name to the scam they'd have a field day. "I owe so many people money," she says, justifying herself. But it was easy to see she found the whole enterprise rather uncomfortable.

Like her, Harvard realizes what's sleazy. "Technically, this is illegal," he says, and he mentions the archtypal Ponzi Pyramid Scheme of the 1920s. But he says Airplane is better because no one person is skimming profits off every transaction. "There's definitely a risk, but no different than playing poker or the stock market."

"Can you pay by check?" my girlfriend asks.

"No, 1,500 cold, hard ones," says Artiste.

"Why is that?"

"This way you don't have to report it to the IRS," Harvard explains. And when you do get your \$12,000, he says, you should deposit it in separate banks because they're obliged to report to the IRS any deposit over \$10,000. It's clear he's done his homework on this.

"Where do you pay?" I ask.

"No money changes hands in the apartment," he says. "You meet on the street somewhere." Which, as I recall, is in the great tradition of Ivan Boesky and Martin Siegel.

In fact, Airplane bears a striking resemblance to the insider trading scandals. The people who get in at the start build (in the Burton Malkiel idiom) "castles in the air," and then run off, leaving the *lumpen* investors buried. Large is beautiful: so long as you don't actually know the suckers at the bottom of the pyramid, who cares? You and your pals can make out like bandits.

New Age con game: These young pilots refuse to see the harm. Just the opposite. Airplane, they say, is a healthy enterprise started by the folks who brought us into the New Age. "Airplane was started

Airplane: a brand new pyramid scam; the same old carrot and stick.

by calm, crystal-loving people who were not money-grubbing," Artiste explains.

For example, as an Airplane player, you're encouraged to get into the team spirit. You're taught to think positively and "deal only with people who emanate success"—a little W. Clement Stone positive mental attitude mixed into your granola. You're commanded to employ hip code names like Dragon, Zimbabwe, Moonshine, Morning Star and Darth Vader. And you're exhorted to donate 10 percent of your profit to charity. It's all very appealing to hypocritical non-business types who want to feel morally superior to bankers and accountants.

Reginald Alev, former executive director and information officer of the Cult Awareness Network in Chicago, calls this type of operation a "prosperity cult." Essentially avaricious people nagged by those aching moral doubts are taught to feel good about amassing vast wealth. So it's no surprise that pyramid scams and phony New Age cult clinics employ similar kinds of head games on fragile yuppies these days.

As with the insider trading scandals, it's hard to feel sorry for yuppies who lose their Brooks Brothers

shirts; our sympathies are obviously better directed elsewhere. By the very nature of a pyramid scheme, as George C. Scott says in *The Flim Flam Man*, "You can only cheat the cheaters. You can never cheat an honest man."

But, in this case that axiom is not altogether true. At Harvard's meeting, a group of less-affluent black nurses shows up at the request of their boss, who happens to have a seat on Harvard's plane. Coercing employees like this is not altogether uncommon in the normal declension of pyramid games, but it is perhaps the most insidious aspect of Airplane.

Who's zoomin' who? A ditzzy white material girl glances over at the black nurses and tells me, "It's a lot of fun to come to meetings and meet people from different socio-economic backgrounds." But it comes to me Harvard is not so stupid. He begins to see exactly who is going to get screwed and that he is the one who is doing it to them.

And for that, he could conceivably end up in the pokey. David Fishlow, a spokesman for the New York attorney general, says 17 people have already been arrested in connection with this particular pyramid game and that undercover agents have been attending meetings citywide with tape recorders and note pads. The penalty for promoting a pyramid is a \$500 fine and/or one year in prison. (People who take part in a transaction in which this much money changes hands, however, can be guilty of federal securities fraud in New York—a felony punishable by up to four years in prison and heavy fines.) Thus far, Airplane promoters have been arrested in (at least) California, Texas, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky and Florida.

Unlike other pyramid schemes such as Holiday Magic, Amway or Herbal Life, where health care products lure the gullible into the game under questionable pretenses, Airplane makes no attempt to mask the purpose. There is no product. As any Airplane player will readily admit, what they bought and what they're selling is simply pure, unadulterated, honest-to-Guru, grade-A American greed.

Some have suggested, myself included, that the young investment bankers are the avatars of yuppie greed, the symbol of our generation's deplorable moral condition. But as Airplane shows, they are not alone. Airplane may have been started by older con-artists, who then rustled up the yuppies, but that's no solace. As R.W.B. Lewis said on the subject of Herman Melville's ingenious little novel *The Confidence Man*: "The Confidence Man is not the bringer of darkness; he is the one who reveals the darkness in ourselves."

Continued on page 22

The Deal of the Century

By Steven Coll
Atheneum, 400 pp., \$18.95

By Barbara Tannenbaum

UNLIKE OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION technology, the telephone is taken for granted by most Americans. The phone is simply there, a medium for private and intimate discussions. It is quite unlike television, photography or recording equipment. These technologies have inspired numerous critics and essayists to stand back and analyze their impact on our culture, while biographers trace the lives of their inventors and subsequent corporate manufacturers.

In contrast, few books examine the development of the Bell Telephone System in a language not geared to an electrical engineer. Searching for a book on any telephone industry figure, aside from Alexander Graham Bell or Theodore Vail quickly becomes frustrating, given the strategic importance of the telephone industry in the urbanization of America after World War II. Fortunately, in his meticulously researched book, *Deal of the Century*, Steven Coll steps into the breach with a rare, engrossing account of MCI's assault on the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. (AT&T) and the businessmen, attorneys and bureaucrats who labored over the break-up of the national telephone system.

Coll, a former business reporter for *Inc.* magazine and the *Washington Post*, does not review the entire history of AT&T's development into America's single, nationally regulated monopoly.

Rather, he takes us from the early '70s, when AT&T's sloppy disregard for its customers was personified by Lily Tomlin's "Ernestine the Operator" sketches, through the birth of MCI and the final settlement that ended the eight-year anti-trust lawsuit in August, 1982.

Throughout *Deal of the Century*, a central question emerges: How in the world did AT&T, with the assistance of three Republican administrations, tremendous lobbying clout and enormous legal and financial resources, lose the case? Digging through thousands of pages of trial transcripts and more than 100 interviews, Coll details the series of hits and misses and accidents of timing that ultimately worked to AT&T's detriment.

In one telling example, he reports how Justice Department attorney Phil Verveer researched and wrote the anti-trust lawsuit during the Nixon administration as department officials were resigning right and left in the midst of the Watergate scandal. Verveer, a liberal attorney who participated in the Civil Rights Movement as a student, realized the politics of any lawsuit

were as important as the legal arguments involved. He found that "the scandal, far from paralyzing the department's political appointees, was precisely what drove them to move the AT&T suit along."

Watergate and the specter of an earlier anti-trust lawsuit filed in 1949 against the telephone company deeply affected the career attorneys who ran the department. The 1949 lawsuit was thrown out of court after seven years by President Eisenhower's attorney general—in a settlement considered scandalous by lower-echelon government lawyers. They felt "AT&T

ANTITRUST

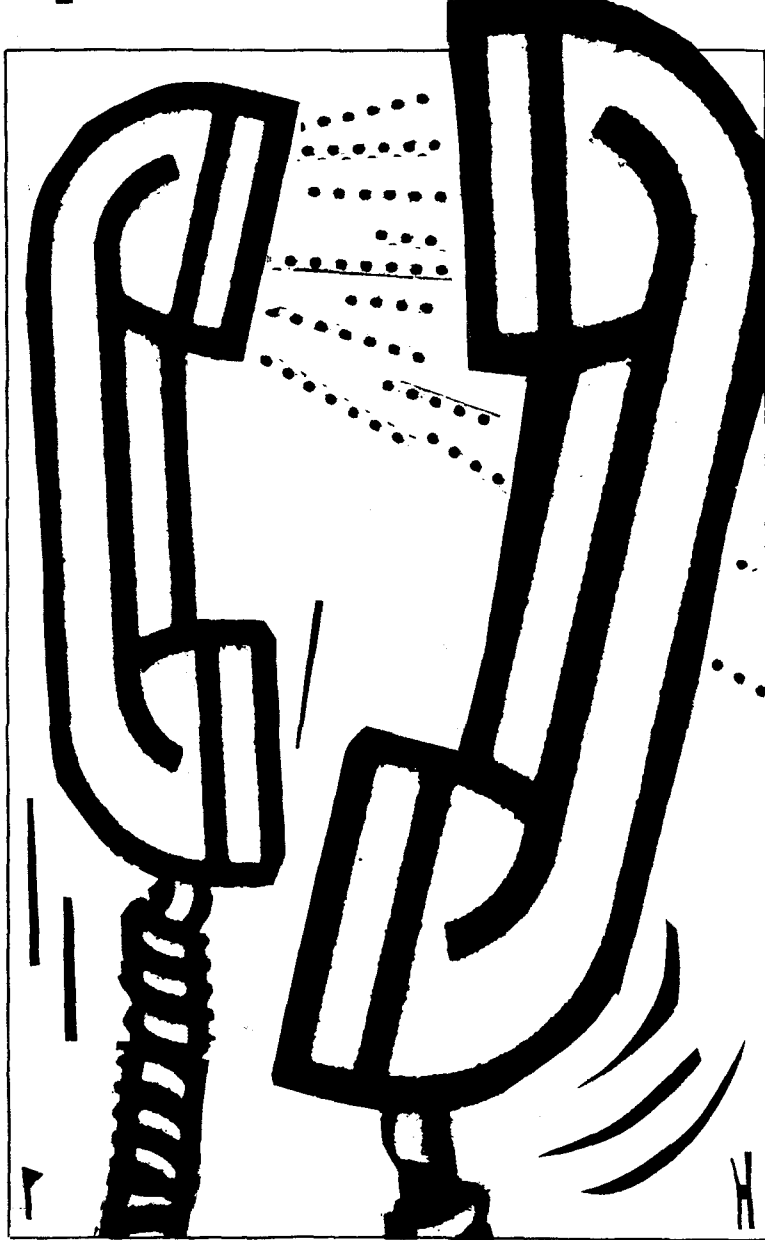
had abused its political power [and] circumnavigated the legal process.... Throughout the '60s, the division maintained files about AT&T's activities, waiting for the right moment to go after [them] again."

It was Attorney General William Saxbe, appointed shortly before Nixon resigned, who decided to bring the new case to court. Estranged from Nixon's and, later, Ford's administration, Saxbe pursued his own policy agenda rather than develop a consensus with the White House. His priority was to restore public confidence in the integrity of the Justice Department. In the unprecedented transition (or vacuum) of power following Watergate, Saxbe was able to file the suit in 1974 without consulting President Ford or any of his colleagues in the cabinet. John DeButts, AT&T's chairman at the time, was astonished.

The Deal of the Century captures one of the central ironies for many of the people involved in the lawsuit—fingering the bad guy. Was it AT&T or MCI? Coll shows how self-described liberals, such as Judge Harold Greene, protégé of Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulator Bernie Strassberg and Justice Department lawyer Phil Verveer were among the many who lined up against AT&T. The corporation was simply too big, too powerful, and too arrogant to inspire any pity or foster concern that competition might be damaging to the company and, by extension, the public. Judge Greene had reservations that AT&T was too big to be regulated. Many of the Justice Department lawyers compiling the anti-trust case against AT&T regarded their work as a "mission" and a natural outgrowth of their earlier work with the Civil Rights Movement and campus politics during the '60s.

But MCI also played fast and loose with the rules when applying for FCC licenses and capitalized on Washington's inbred mistrust of the phone company. As Coll notes at the end, "15 years earlier, the MCI

Ma Bell: breaking up is hard to do



chairman could not have dreamed that his legal and political guerrilla war against the phone company would go so far, would actually lead to the complete breakup of the world's biggest corporation. If he had dreamed it, he might have awoken in a cold sweat."

Coll anticipates that MCI's lower prices for long distance service will disappear by the year 2000. MCI's original price advantage over AT&T, Coll explains, was based on AT&T's expensive long distance rates, which subsidized local calls. In coming years, both AT&T and MCI will have the same fixed costs of operating their networks.

The author's review of the lawsuit leaves him with a sense of disgust, noting that "precious little in [the history of *U.S. vs. AT&T*]...was the product of a single, coherent philosophy, or a genuine, reasoned consensus.... Rather, the crucial decisions made in the telecommunications industry during the '70s and early '80s were driven by opportunism, short-term politics, ego, desperation, miscalculation, happenstance [and] greed.... If anyone had emerged [victorious] from that embarrassing history in how *not* to make public policy, it would have been a phenomenal accident. And

no one did. Not telephone consumers, not AT&T, not MCI."

A lack of understanding clouded AT&T's defense strategy, the media's coverage of the trial and the public's perception of divestiture. DeButts, who consistently mentioned AT&T's unusual obligation as a national utility monopoly, "asked, not illogically, 'why would [they] want to mess up the world's best telephone system?'" Yet he and AT&T trial attorney George

The Deal of the Century by Steven Coll captures one of the central ironies for many of the people involved in the lawsuit—fingering the bad guy.

Saunders never did realize that many people did not grasp the tradition they were speaking of, nor did they attempt to explain what, to them, was obvious.

Coll also gives low marks to re-

porters covering the trial who inexplicably hailed AT&T—which had to sell off two-thirds of its corporate assets—as the victor in the settlement. The public, too, woke up to see that escalating phone bills and lower-quality service was the outcome of AT&T's dismemberment. In the hoopla and public outcry that followed the conclusion of the case, AT&T attorney George Saunders bitterly remarked to Judge Greene, "I told Your Honor...this case raised a truly fundamental issue. What is the relationship between a public utility and its antitrust laws...? And Your Honor has expressed it yourself: 'Hey, you are just a big corporation, go out and make money, quit pretending that you are really concerned with the public interest'.... The very people who are now screaming in the newspapers that this is contrary to the public interest, I can't help but think, 'Where were you?'"

The questions raised by Saunders have never been the subject of national debate, nor did Coll have room to discuss them in *The Deal of the Century*. But from its earliest days, AT&T's fate was balanced between the progressive movement's trust-busting fervor (which dismantled Rockefeller's Standard Oil Co.) and the same movement's creation of regulatory oversight commissions. As a result, Ma Bell, as a form of economic activity, was as close as any American company gets to state-sponsored socialism. It was regulated by every state commission, Congress and the FCC; it was completely unionized; and it made big business subsidize the price of local telephone service. But rather than look back on those events as the "good old days of the Bell System," the background provided by Coll is essential to understanding the ongoing policy decisions issuing from the FCC and Congress in order to usher in "the Information Age."

For the past year, state regulatory commissions and the FCC have debated to what extent competition and economic diversification should be allowed within local telephone operating companies. Last fall in Congress, Sen. Robert Dole (R-KN) and Sen. John Danforth (R-MO) drafted a bill that would relieve Judge Greene of his duties in administering the terms of the AT&T settlement. Given this turn of events, it is quite possible to imagine, although it would be a shame, that a final, free-for-all deregulation of the phone industry will be achieved with insignificant national debate, by ideologues who see the issues of monopoly utility service versus competition in the strictest tones of black and white.

Barbara Tannenbaum is a San Francisco-based freelance writer who specializes in telecommunication issues.

A hot August night on Broadway

Fences

By August Wilson

By Michael Phillips

A RECENT FINAL PREVIEW PERFORMANCE of *Fences*—August Wilson's drama starring James Earl Jones—came off with very few hitches and a standing ovation. The scene afterward outside New York's 46th Street Theater was both familiar and a little odd. Familiar because two dozen or so people were crowding one of the show's stars for an autograph; odd, because the star in question wasn't the star at all.

It was the playwright.

August Wilson's spirit of benign restlessness—most obvious when he's revving up on a topic of conversation, smoking cigarettes, speaking in hushed, hurried tones—can easily accommodate such a moment in the limelight. But he's not the type to covet attention. His image remains determinedly low-key. Author Ishmael Reed, writing in *Connoisseur* magazine, claimed that talking to Wilson "is like trying to communicate with a clam."

Like many aspects of this Pittsburgh-born poet and playwright currently living in St. Paul, Minn., that statement contradicts itself. Once Wilson gets going, his love of storytelling and enthusiasm for the people he's known and the people he's created comes spilling out. He's just not loud about it. His words on paper do more talking than the man behind them.

And talk they do, in voices lyrical enough to propel Wilson's amazingly fast rise in American theater. His first trip to Broadway, with *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, won the New York Drama Critics Circle award for best play. Samuel Freedman, in his recent profile for the *New York Times* magazine, calls Wilson's "the most auspicious arrival of an American playwright since that of David Mamet some 15 years ago."

His latest Broadway arrival, *Fences* (previously performed with the same cast in Chicago and San Francisco), last week won the highest official praise: the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for drama. Like all his plays, it fills a specific niche in his personal artistic quest: to cover, with one play for each decade, the 20th-century experience of black Americans and their struggle to find a personal identity—despite being what one of the *Ma Rainey* characters calls "the leftovers" of history.

Turning up the heat: Racism in all its stripes—some more pronounced than others—has molded

Wilson's life and craft since his formative years. The lasting problems of growing up black in white America have energized Wilson as a social historian and dramatist. Wilson, 43, was born and raised in the Hill ghetto of Pittsburgh. *Fences*, like most of his works, takes place there. Its protagonist, Troy Maxson (James Earl Jones), makes

THEATER

his \$76.42 a week as a garbageman, nursing old memories of his days as a Negro League baseball slugger barred by the major leagues' color barrier.

Among other things, Maxson is an ex-con with a 34-year-old son by a previous marriage. His second wife, Rose, and their high-school-age son Cory have pieced together a reasonable life for themselves. But conflicts threaten that stability: Troy's affair with another woman, for instance, and Cory's determination to play college football—which Troy, still smarting from his own past, will do anything to block.

Maxson is a character charged with contradictions, and, as James Earl Jones inhabits him, he's both larger than life and painfully down to earth.

Fences provokes some divergent audience reactions as well. Crowds have been laughing and crying right along with the characters. But some of the laughter has been unsettling. As Jones puts it, Maxson "represents something very hopeful, especially for the black female. He's a strong man who has the chance to make something happen, rather than just fuck up. And then he proceeds to fuck up. It's the last thing they want to see. They want to reject what's happened. And the laughter that's derisive...I can only read that as a message."

Autobiographical resonance: There's always a temptation to probe a writer's past, looking for links to his characters. Wilson denies any direct autobiographical details in *Fences*, although his stepfather, like Troy, served a prison term of 23 years, and a rift between the two resulted some time after Wilson dropped out of ninth grade.

"I was writing poetry and hanging out on street corners, basically," remembers Wilson. "I think for the most part he was disappointed that I never went to college, or never became a lawyer—you know, something that maybe he would have done if he had gotten the opportunity."

By 1970 Wilson found himself in the thrall of such black nationalist influences as Malcolm X (he eventually wrote a one-man play about him), Amiri Baraka and others.



Mary Alice and James Earl Jones in the New York production of *Fences*.

With a fellow Pittsburgh writer, he co-founded a theater called Black Horizon on the Hill.

Wilson got his first official encouragement through the Minneapolis Playwrights' Center, when he received a grant in 1981 to develop *Fullerton Street*, his 1940s play in the 10-decade plan. In 1982 *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* was picked up by Connecticut's O'Neill Theater Center, which every summer solicits a dozen new scripts for a workshop. Thus began an ongoing association with both the O'Neill and the Yale Repertory Theater. The

Playwright August Wilson proves he's a heavy hitter with *Fences*.

unofficial pipeline connecting Wilson with the O'Neill and Yale (and beyond) has since produced four polished scripts: *Ma Rainey*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and, his latest, *The Piano Lesson*—his play for the '30s and the work Wilson feels is his best.

Wilson's talkin' blues: As a writer, Wilson lets his characters and their talk dictate the form of the re-

sulting script. *Ma Rainey's* blues musicians, *Joe Turner's* boarding-house drifters, the garbage men of *Fences*—all of Wilson's characters love to talk. And they sing various forms of the blues—in speech and song—with lusty passion.

Though he isn't confined to strict realism, Wilson's plays typically stick to one setting. *Ma Rainey* tells of an imagined series of events before, during and after a session with blues singer Ma Rainey and her backup men; the Broadway production of *Fences*, set in 1957, features a splendidly realistic back-alley house; *Joe Turner* juggles a slew of characters all under the same Pittsburgh boarding-house roof, circa 1911.

"The way I work," says Wilson, "I benefit from a historical perspective. Part of what I'm trying to do is look at the choices that confronted blacks in this century. I think at some points we made some wrong choices. By looking back I'm trying to illuminate those points in time."

"How can you acquire a sense of self-worth by denying your past? Some black Americans have tried to do that. I don't think that's possible...for me, blacks need to return to what I call their roots—to recognize the fact that we're African people.

The notion has always been that if we want to participate in this society we have to give up our Africanness. If blacks were allowed their cultural differences this would be a much better society than it is now."

Death on the outside corner:

It comes out more strongly in his other works, but *Fences*, too, highlights several of Wilson's most crucial concerns—namely the African oral tradition (i.e. storytelling) and a preoccupation with what he calls "God, man and the devil." In *Ma Rainey*, an explosive young trumpet player, Levee, slashes a switchblade at the skies at one anguished point, challenging "the white man's God" to prevent him from killing another man. Troy Maxson refers to death as "nothin' but a fastball on the outside corner," yet it's a constant, looming threat for the man and his transgressions.

Joe Turner and *The Piano Lesson* may be the most explicitly "African" of Wilson's works in terms of metaphor and symbol. With his upcoming script, the 1960s-set *Two Trains Running*, Wilson intends to "uncover the kind of folk myths that might have existed in that decade, to try to create a myth that contains in it all the African rituals, burial rites—explore the whole idea of myth and how it functions within a community."

Heady stuff, especially for a white mainstream audience, which may be more immediately comfortable with the familiar father-son milieu of *Fences*. Yet, as Wilson explains it, "it's no different than a black man going to see *The Seagull*. You see those people and you might think, 'I don't understand those people living like this; all they do is sit around and talk.' On one level, you can say it doesn't relate to your life. But on another one, he's writing about some very large, universal human ideas."

Wilson sometimes finds himself looking back a few years, to the time he worked as a cook and wrote. "I remember that time as having all the time in the world. Now I write two weeks here, two weeks there..." His next 10 months are booked solid, first with a rewrite of *The Piano Lesson*, then finishing a first draft of *Two Trains Running*, then going with *Joe Turner* to Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., and later New York. Beyond that, some screenwriting offers have come up (one to write a script for Whoopi Goldberg), and some talk of bringing *Ma Rainey* to the screen.

Meantime, as *Fences* enters its second month on Broadway, the effect of the Pulitzer Prize on the box office remains uncertain. Awards aside, Wilson's course is clear. He's got more stories to tell, and one suspects they'll only get better. ■
Michael Phillips is arts editor of the Minneapolis-St. Paul weekly *City Pages*.

Max Headroom
ABC-TV

By Pat Aufderheide

Tuning in a heady mix: network failure and the Max factor

MAX HEADROOM, THE computer-generated cult figure from Britain, has finally arrived on the American screen. The pilot episode of new series *Max Headroom* on ABC Tuesday nights, was enough to revive the spirits of those looking for a critical edge to postmodern culture.

In the airier regions of critical theory recently there's been much talk about the social implications of "postmodern culture," whose expressions range from the architectural style of new hotels to music videos and from fiction where narrative deconstructs itself to collage-style post-punk fashion. And while definitions are in debate, somehow the boundary line is eroding between art and mass culture: yesterday Andy Warhol, today David Byrne. And tomorrow?

In much work that crosses the line, you find a centerless quality; where a stable set of values used to be, there's a swirling pastiche of cultural references. Does that mean that postmodern culture cannot be critical or satirical, lacking as it does a base from which to poke received wisdom or authority? Is merely descriptive pastiche going to substitute for parody? Like the hero of the movie *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*, are we to cast a quizzical eye on it all and say with him, "Wherever you go, there you are"?

And then every once in a while a cultural product exploits the potential of high-tech pop culture, capturing the dislocation so central to the experience of daily life these days—without abandoning a sense of meaning. That's what made the Sun City music video and the movie *Brazil* so intriguing, and what's attractive about the performances and albums of Laurie Anderson. The pilot episode of *Max Headroom* is another example, although the second episode takes a deep step backward into more traditional situation drama.

Big Max attacks: Max, a computer image looking like a Frankenstein-version of a TV anchorman, has become a kind of hero to a generation born with a remote control unit in their hands. He's a friendly monster, the soul of the new information-machinery. Through seemingly random call-up of the signals and slogans of mass media, the addled TV anchor emits rogue messages into the system. Thoroughly a creation of a digital universe, he's also a live-on-tape critique of it.

A creation of Briton Peter Wagg, Max evolved on British TV's Channel 4, with the help of special effects wondermakers George Dugdale and Peter Litten, and not without some corporate resistance to Max's impudent assaults on the industry's self-importance. His ensuing popularity

made him the hero of a special feature on cable TV in the U.S.

A miserably third-place ABC, racked by accusations of corporate interference with programming and bottom-line butchery, gambled that Max would raise ratings while rescuing ABC's reputation. For the pilot, ABC execs gave carte blanche to executive producer Philip DeGuere, an independent TV and film producer, and the production also carried forward some of the old gang that originally created Max Headroom—producer Wagg (who was long since dropped from the British show) and special effects men Dugdale and Litten.

It's a brilliant piece of television, combining sharp social satire and exuberant formal play. The plot reads like something Thomas Pynchon, Philip K. Dick and Terry Gilliam might cook up while standing on a CBS picket line. The time is "20 minutes into the future," where savage capitalism can be seen in TV network boardroom greed and in high-tech rubble littering the post-Apocalypse street.

Investigative reporter Edison Carter (Matt Frewer) stumbles on an inconvenient truth: new condensed commercials intended to keep viewers from channel-switching, called "blipverts," can be lethal. In Network 23's board room, the network president, whose swivel-head tics resemble those of President Reagan, consults with the computer nerd who's invented blipverts. The decision comes down: kill Carter.

It doesn't work, but the nerd does duplicate the unconscious Carter's memory in a computer-generated

image named after the blockade sign that the reporter collides with (Max Headroom 2.3m). Soon both Max and Carter, with the help of a network HQ-based "control" (Amanda Pays), are caught up in the swirl of corporate deceit.

A lost soul in the new machine: At episode's end, Max does a little freelance announcing, to street people watching piles of TV sets (in a scene that looks like Nam June Paik TV sculptures after the bomb). "How can you tell when our network president is lying?" he asks. "His lips move."

The notion that a network will kill the occasional viewer in order to keep ratings high and advertisers happy is an astounding premise for prime-time storytelling. But more astounding still is the way the story's told. This tale all takes place inside the new TV. With computer graphics seen in creation on screen; images overlaid with information "meant" to be seen only by the control; multiple images on TV screens filling the screen with redundant information; and action occupied with the inputting and outputting of data—in all these ways the series debut puts technology in the center of the story without losing the story thread. The heady digital expressionism captures the information-overload quality of our media-obsessed lives, and it shows television as not just a business but a way of ordering relationships, channeling desire and, finally, as a way of seeing.

Although the *Max Headroom* pilot dazzles with its fast tracking across the media landscape, it's not just a moving piece of video-

graphic pop art. The action in each scene revolves around work-life, the business of getting and delivering information within a corporate structure. Characters define themselves through their split-second decisions together. Television is the world that shapes what they become, just as the business of space exploitation shaped the crew's options (or rather lack of them) in *Alien*.

Video gadfly Max Headroom becomes a quixotic public service announcement.

If the pilot is chock full of references to other pieces of pop culture—a touch of the movie *Brazil* in the use of archaic technology, a hint of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a smattering of *Blade Runner* and *Kamikaze '89* and even PacMan and ratings charts—it's also boldly referential to real life issues. "Zipping" and "zapping" on VCRs, where viewers can glide through commercial segments, are a major concern of advertisers; and the effects of 10- and 15-second commercials are being debated in the wake of deregulation permitting them. The blipvert controversy is a permutation on corporate outrages of the kind we've seen from, among others, the A.H. Robins Company (with the Dalkon Shield).

In short, the pilot of *Max Headroom* goes where *The Adventures of*

Buckaroo Banzai never dared. But it may go further than anything that follows it. The pilot's follow-up suggests that a little innovation goes a long way, while the Coke commercials that use Max Headroom suggest it probably goes in the wrong direction, for advertisers.

Heading for trouble: In the Coke commercials ("Catch the wave"), Max's cult status is reduced neatly to his quality as electronic pastiche, not the ghost in the corporate machine. In the show, Max is born as a collection of slogans and hype and ratings-lust, but by acting in the world he transcends his origins—to corporate chagrin. He blabs the secrets along with the slogans, and, repression-free, asks embarrassing questions. But in the commercials, Max is pure hype; he revels in cynicism.

The second episode, lacking the guiding hand of DeGuere, also lacks the sizzle of the first; it drifts in the direction of prime-time soap opera. This time, Edison is hot on the trail of on-air violence. He saves Theora's brother from a life-or-death match as a skateboard gladiator, and keeps skateboarding (shades of *Rollerball* and *Mad Max*, *Beyond the Thunderdome*) from being the next ratings winner on Network 23. If the plot is a touch more pious than the first, it's still a kick to see the ratings warriors get poked.

But as in the first, the plot is only part of the story. With a slower pace, greater dependence on dialogue, and less reliance on video-style camera work, you can already see Max Headroom settling into series middle age.

Edison and his "control" Theora are quickly developing a dread TV-series disease: what's known as "character development." They are sprouting the tics and traits that will become the crustacean-shell of their TV personalities. And now that *Moonlighting*, which leads into *Max Headroom*, no longer revolves around the "will they, won't they?" sex question, this couple may step in to pose it weekly. Meanwhile, Max has become Edison's slightly batty sidekick, and as the conscience of the network he's less a rogue voice than a kind of quixotic public service announcement.

Just how daring is ABC going to let *Max Headroom* be, week after week? And the ratings, which declined for the second show, suggest that ABC may decide that daring—especially daring that also insults network authority—just doesn't pay.

But whatever lurks 20 minutes into *Max Headroom's* future, the pilot episode is a classic. It delivered 60 minutes of unexpected provocation to a fabulously lucrative business that specializes in finding the lowest common denominator of viewer expectation, employing state-of-the-art technology to deliver a state-of-the-culture story. Look for it on video. ■

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Chlordane

Continued from page 7

"Oh God, I didn't know that."

Looking the other way: In December 1976 Sen. Edward Kennedy's subcommittee on administrative practice and procedure called the EPA's pesticide regulation policies "fundamentally deficient." More than 10 years later, Diane Baxter is able to refer to studies indicating that chlordane and heptachlor have caused cataracts and early deaths, reduced birth rates and suppressed immune systems among mice pups.

Yet the EPA does not yet recognize chlordane as having any of those effects. "I don't think the EPA has done all they ought to do," Baxter said. On March 23 her organization petitioned the EPA for an emergency suspension of the use of all cyclodienes, including chlordane, heptachlor, dieldrin and aldrin.

Michael Block, an Illinois attorney, recently won a six-figure judgment for a couple whose immune systems were damaged by chlordane injected beneath their home. But the EPA is not interested in chlordane's effects on the immune system.

A Velsicol bulletin warns that exposure to chlordane can cause chronic hyperexcitabil-

ity, tremors and convulsions. Yet, the EPA does not believe chlordane's possible chronic effects on nervous systems need study. "We didn't think [chronic neurotoxicity] was of concern," Tinsworth said.

During the hearings that led to chlordane and heptachlor being banned in New York, Dr. Eric Comstock, a Velsicol witness, said headaches, fainting spells, vomiting, depression, birth defects and miscarriages are symptoms of a peculiar psychological disorder resulting from the belief one's home or environment has been contaminated by chemicals.

Velsicol will continue to present such testimony as "science." After all, selling toxic chemicals is their business. But the EPA's reliance on a repeat offender to provide regulatory evidence supports statements by the agency's harshest critics.

"EPA's labeling and restricted-use policies, unintelligible and contradictory as they may seem, do serve several purposes," wrote Lewis Regenstein in *America the Poisoned*. "They keep the public reassured that it is being protected from 'banned' and 'restricted' pesticides, while allowing the chemical...interests to carry on business as usual..."

William K. Burke writes about environmental issues for *In These Times*.

Nicaragua's poor

Continued from page 11

possible, but that will take months, if not years.

Other development organizations are hatching plans to help as well. CEPAD, an agency of Nicaraguan Protestants, hopes to build 100 small solid houses on the site. And a solidarity group from Oxford, England, is also studying the possibility of helping the residents improve the neighborhood. For the foreseeable future, Nicaragua's poor will have to look to extra-governmental agencies for assistance.

"It is very painful for us not to be able to help," said Municipal Secretary Canales. "The revolution was made for the poor. But for the time being, defense of the revolution is our first priority."

Questionable priorities: Some critics, however, have pointed out that the government might have its priorities confused. Several new government buildings are going up in Managua, and several million dollars will be spent beginning this year to expand the luxury Intercontinental Hotel. These projects cannot be more important than providing people with housing, according to the

critics.

Despite the problems, however, the residents of Heroes and Martyrs of Calvarito seem undaunted. Sandoval explained that since most of them had no homes of their own before, current problems seem surmountable. "Most of us lived with relatives until we had too many children and the conditions became impossible," he said. "Now we own our land, and know that some day our lives will improve."

Sandoval and Jimenez hope to get some government assistance to build schools in their fledgling neighborhoods, and they have planned a tree-planting project to cut the wind that torments residents with clouds of dust. They also hope to start a tinderblock-making business that would bring work to the neighborhood.

For the time being, however, life will remain difficult. Maritza Alvarado said she and her eight children dread the onset of the rainy season in May. "In the dry season the winds tear the plastic," she said, pointing to her tattered roof and wall. "Then the rains come and soak everything. But what can you do?"

Alan Gottlieb is *In These Times'* correspondent in Nicaragua.

Airplane

Continued from page 18

Harvard calls me up in 2:00 a.m. darkness two nights after his meeting. I had informed him through a friend that the *New York Times* was about to do a story on Airplane and that the state attorney general was investigating promoters of the scheme.

"So, Norman, am I hosed?" he asks. "Depends on what you mean by 'hosed,'" I say.

"I don't think you'll end up in jail or anything, but you probably shouldn't have any more meetings at your place. And that means you and your friends may lose your investments. Better to cut your losses."

"Well, I've already made my money back," he says. "But I'm supposed to meet a couple of people tomorrow. Do I take their money, knowing what I know now? Or is my loyalty to the people I've already brought in the game, the people on my Airplane, who expect

me to keep this going? If I don't take the money, then they're really screwed."

"That's one hell of an ethical dilemma," I say.

"That's a *real* ethical dilemma," he agrees.

Norman Atkins, a New York freelance writer, is a frequent contributor to *Rolling Stone* and the *Village Voice*. (He is sick of writing about yuppies, however they do such outlandishly stupid things that he can't resist the subject.)

Walker

Continued from page 24

Asked whether the production might be putting an undue strain on the Nicaraguan economy, Cox said, "One thing that has struck me about the Nicaraguan government is that it's extremely pragmatic. This is neither a people's paradise nor a totalitarian society. If the government felt it was not in its best interests to give us all those resources, then we wouldn't be getting them."

Also, he said, while it is true that schools, health clinics and houses could be built with the lumber used on the movie set, "There are also a lot of schools, clinics and houses being burned down, and people are being murdered. We're hoping to have some impact on that with this film."

The publicity will benefit the country more than the temporary inconvenience will hurt, added cast member Joe Strummer, former lead singer with the Clash. "To make a film in Nicaragua gives the world something else to think about this country other than the fact that you can't get razor blades here," Strummer said.

Strummer, whose band made an album entitled *Sandinista* in 1980, described this, his first trip to Nicaragua, as a moving experience. "I really needed this," he said. "I get so sick of the Western world complaining. Here, people have got nothing, yet you don't hear them complaining."

Strummer and several other actors have recently rented apartments in Granada, preferring this city's rustic charm to the sterile surroundings of the Intercontinental Hotel.

Cast member Weisser said he began to have second thoughts about moving to Granada when he discovered his apartment here had no shower. "But then I went out the first morning to this big cement sink in the courtyard," he said. "There was a wooden bucket sitting there, and I filled it with water and poured it over my head. It felt great; it felt like such a natural motion. I think I'll bathe that way the rest of the time I'm here."

And, he added, "Who needs an air-conditioned trailer, anyway?"

Alan Gottlieb, who reports frequently from Nicaragua for *In These Times*, worked as an extra in *Walker*—playing a member of the firing squad that executes the Nicaraguan president.

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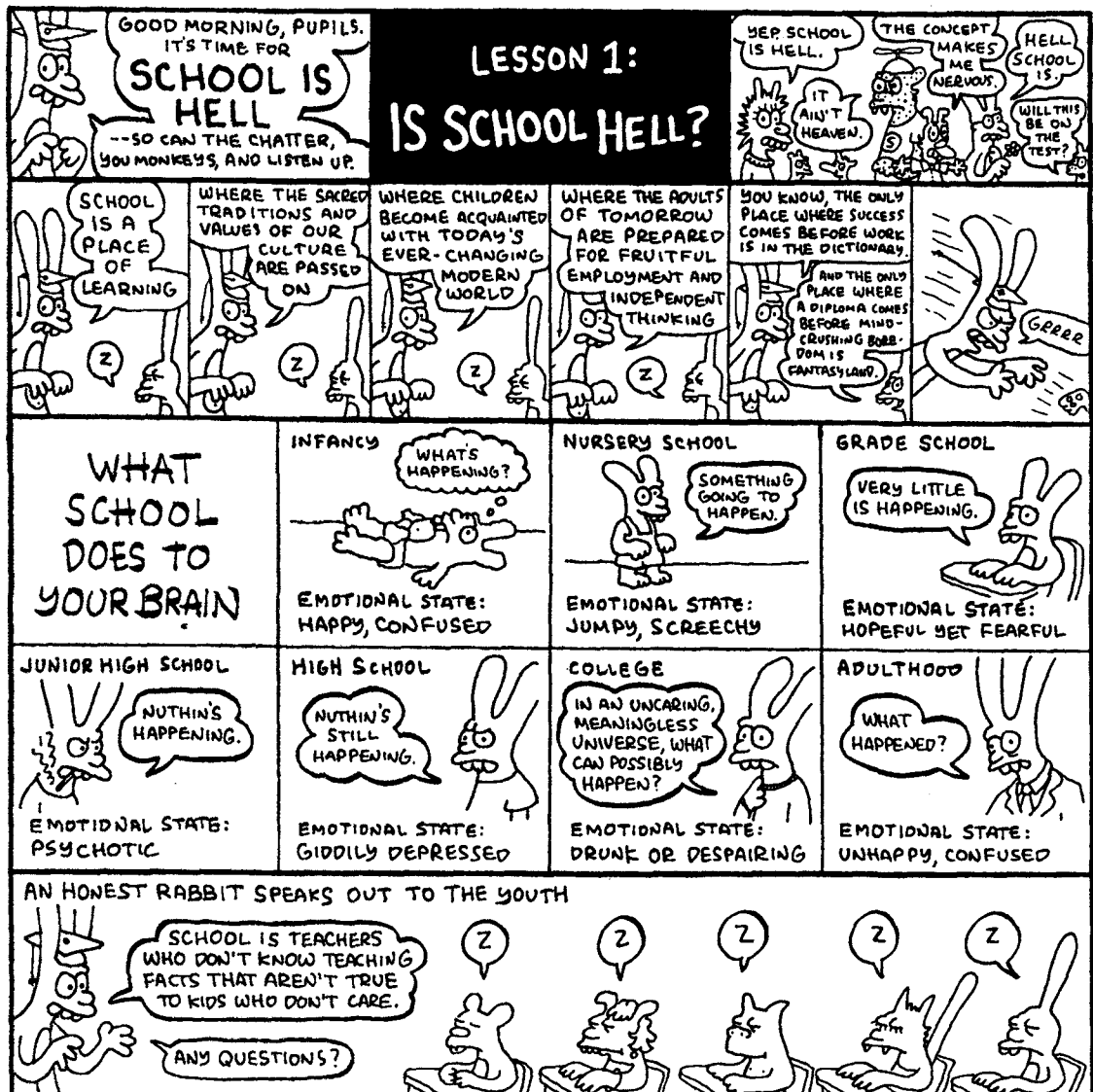
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Film director Alex Cox re-enacts William Walker's 1855 incursion in the hope that history won't repeat itself.

By Alan Gottlieb

GRANADA, NICARAGUA

THE ARMY OF MERCENARIES ARRIVED IN THE central plaza of this colonial city at dawn. The troops were edgy, anticipating resistance from the fiercely nationalistic Nicaraguans. But all was quiet. Troops and commander alike seemed unable to believe their stroke of good fortune. Granada was unprotected. With a grin, the American colonel gave the order for his men to loot the town and arrest all government officials.

Many people here fear these events might actually happen some day soon, but this recent storming of Granada was the re-enactment of an event that took place 135 years ago. An international film crew headed by British director Alex Cox has been in Granada for the past several weeks filming *Walker*, based on the story of William Walker, a Tennessee-born adventurer who invaded Nicaragua with a ragtag army and became the country's president for more than a year in the 1850s. Filming is scheduled to continue through early May.

The obvious parallels between the *Walker* story and Nicaragua's present situation are among the main points the film hopes to make, according to Cox, who also directed *Repo Man* and *Sid and Nancy*. "If this film can in any way work as an antidote to the murderous insanity and genocide of the Reagan administration, then making it will have been more than worth the trouble," Cox said.

Lawyers, guns and money: Though set in the 1850s (Granada's paved streets were covered with a foot of dirt for realism's sake), the film will make use of several jarring 20th-century anachronisms to underscore the similarities between Walker's invasion and the Reagan administration's Nicaragua policy.

Cox, script writer Rudy Wurlitzer and as-

sociate producer Lorenzo O'Brien spent almost two years persuading U.S. and Mexican investors to make the film in Nicaragua rather than in Mexico. And though filming has begun and large sums of money have already been spent, battles are still being fought, Cox said.

Most recently, a U.S. insurance company has twice cancelled the film's completion bond, essentially the production's insurance policy. Without such a bond, Cox said, a major film cannot be made. As of the first week in April the bond was in place, but Cox said he anticipates more troubles ahead.

Yet, he said, the production staff has grown accustomed to the adversity. "The American investors from the outset tried to impose conditions that would have forced us to film in Mexico," said Cox, sipping a beer after a 14-hour day on the set. "But we want to make the film in Nicaragua, because we believe the world's perception of Nicaragua is important. If a major film can be made here efficiently and well, it reflects well upon the country."

Unquestionably, some efficiency has been sacrificed to make this "statement." Nicaragua has never hosted a large-scale film production. With the economy in a shambles, and food and construction materials in short supply, the Sandinista government's resources have been stretched to the limit to accommodate the film crew.

The actors, most of whom are accustomed to being pampered on film sets, have had to forego most of the luxuries they would normally expect. Neither Ed Harris (*The Right Stuff*, *A Flash of Green*, *Alamo Bay*), who plays Walker, nor any of the other stars have air-conditioned trailers. Cold drinks are

scarce on the hot, dusty set. And the cast and crew are being housed at the Intercontinental Hotel in Managua, a bumpy hour's ride from the filming location.

"It's amazing, though," said actor Xander Berkeley, who plays Byron Cole, Walker's publicist. "I've never heard less complaining on a set in my life, and objectively speaking, there's more cause for complaint here than anywhere else I've ever worked. But we're an iconoclastic bunch, and most of us are doing this for reasons other than money."

A \$7-million shoestring: Almost without exception the actors in *Walker* said they are participating because they feel strongly about the film's political message. All said they are working for a fraction of what they would normally make. Some turned down other, more lucrative roles to be part of this production. Consequently, the film is being shot on a \$7 million budget—one-third of what it would have cost to film in Mexico, Cox said.

Norbert Weisser, who plays a Prussian officer allied with Walker, said he was offered a role in a film with a guaranteed sequel "for a great deal of money." But, he said, "the choice came down to this: to make these other two movies, to be filmed in South Africa, or to come down here and work with people I care about on a project I care about in a country I care about. For almost all of us, the politics were the great lure."

This political awareness has unified the cast and made actors feel closer to Nicaraguans who show up every day to watch the filming, Weisser said. "I think the unity of purpose we feel here will show up in the quality of the film," he said. "And we're all

having a great time with the people here."

During every break in filming, many of the actors stroll into the city's central plaza to talk and joke with residents. Although some people who live near the location grumble about what they call "Walker's invasion of Granada, 1987," most people in Granada seemed thrilled to have such an event taking place in their town.

Two-tiered pay scale: But there are some discordant notes. Dozens of Granada residents selected to play market vendors and peasants in the film are paid \$2 per day, while U.S. and European extras get \$5 per day for portraying Walker's foot soldiers. Neither the soldiers nor the peasants are played by professional actors, and their limited responsibilities are identical. No one on the set could offer a clear explanation for the wage discrepancy.

An official of the Nicaraguan Cinema Institute, a government agency working closely with the production team, said only that, "Costs must be held down."

This did not sit well with the Nicaraguan extras. "This movie is supposed to make a statement against oppression of Nicaraguans by foreigners," said a young extra from Granada who asked not to be named. "And look what's happening. They pay us less because we are Nicas."

Most Nicaraguans around the set, however, said they support the project. Walker is a well-known and much-reviled figure in Nicaraguan history. Local residents said the anti-intervention message is clear.

In part because of the film's barely submerged statement against U.S. policy, the Sandinista government has made a concerted effort to provide everything the film crew needs. Buses, taxis, lumber and food, all in extremely short supply throughout the country, have been surprisingly abundant.

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